

POPE AND THE STAGE METAPHOR

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Preface

The subject of this study is Pope's use of stage metaphor, and my thesis is that the stage metaphor and imagery which appear throughout Pope's works reflect traditional Christian humanist concerns with man's failure to recognize his own limitations. More particularly, I argue that in the Dunciad Pope employs stage imagery to satirize those contemporary scientific millennialist concepts which tended to transform the traditional Christian view of the drama of human salvation into the eighteenth-century concept of man's natural perfectibility. Since Pope's employment of theatrical imagery contains ontological and moral implications inextricably linked to earlier significances of the idea of the world as a stage, the first two chapters of this study examine the larger meanings of the classical, medieval, Renaissance, and seventeenth-century uses of the world-stage concept.

Chapters I and II show how the trope of man the cosmic actor functioned as an intricate symbolic construct for views of man's place in the universe--in a world of evanescent joys and mutable fortunes, of masking deceptions and external values, man's existence was linked to the

"sham," and "outward" reality of the human actor's existence for various ethical purposes. A basic idea in the traditional use of the idea of the world as a theatrum mundi was that man was to act out a divinely assigned role on God's stage; that role received, however, differing ontological and moral emphases in the various formulations of the world-stage concept. In the ethical perspective of the Platonist and the Stoic, which emphasized man's grandeur as an essentially spiritual-rational being, man misplayed his proper role by failing to transcend his "lower," animal nature through a lack of spiritual and rational self-perfection. In introducing the new properties of Grace and Sin onto the cosmic stage, Christianity envisioned human existence as a brief, divinely plotted drama in which man the sinner played on a probationary stage, and was tested by God for his fitness for eternal salvation. And in the Christian view of man's dual state of grandeur and misère, man was seen continually misplaying his proper role through lack of proper self-knowledge of his own fallen, but redeemable condition. As both the son of Adam and the heir of heaven, the Christian acted out his "true" part in God's drama by recognizing his own imperfections and by trusting divine wisdom to lead him to his goal of salvation.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries important alterations in the Christian view of man

gradually arose as the result of a new optimism over human capabilities, an optimism which stemmed primarily from Platonic emphasis on man as being essentially a spiritual-rational creature. In the works of such Platonists as Juan Vives, Henry More and Thomas Burnet, the world-stage concept came to reflect the idea of man's power to progressively transcend his "lower," animal affinities; and in More's and Burnet's scientific millennialist works, this idea received unique expression in their notions that the basic "plot" of the divine drama involved new earthly "scenes" of man's destined spiritual-rational perfection. Burnet, furthermore, presented a radically new vision of the Christian drama of salvation by equating man's supposed spiritual progress towards a millennial kingdom of the just on earth with man's increasing natural advances in scientific knowledge. Throughout this same period, however, such Christian humanists as Erasmus, Thomas More and Shakespeare also used the world-stage concept to retain more traditional Christian views of man's inherited perplexities and frailties in the divine theatre.

Chapter III shows how the stage metaphor which appears in Pope's works is closely linked to these latter Christian humanist views of man's innate limitations on God's stage. More specifically, Chapter III attempts to demonstrate how Pope's stage imagery in the first three

books of the Dunciad is subtly formulated to reveal the dangers inherent in Burnet's scientific millennialist concept of man's new destiny of perfection in the divine drama. Through an artful use of stage metaphor by which activities on the lesser world of the London pantomimic "show" reveal man's refusal to play his proper role in the greater cosmic "show" in God's theatre, Pope suggests the idea of a new perverse plot of progress in the cosmic "show"--Dulness's destined, and perverse, moral and social advance towards a new mechanistic and egocentric order. And Pope's theatrical depiction of this progress, with its major "scenes" of the conflagration-like uncreation of the world and recreation of a "new world" of the "Kingdom of the Dull upon Earth," is shown to contain an intricate parody of Burnet's notion of man's intellectual-scientific progress towards perfection.

Chapter IV shows how Pope further uses theatrical imagery in the fourth book of the Dunciad to reinforce his attacks on Burnet, and thus produces a rich and unified satire on the widespread scientific progressivist tendencies of his own day. Throughout the Dunciad, as in all of his other works, Pope utilized the traditional view of the world as a stage as an emblem of man's proper place in divine order; and at the close of this poem, the last of his works, we see man's prideful attempt to transcend his assigned role on God's stage as that which ushers in universal darkness.

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One: Players on the Cosmic Stage

The central thesis of this study is that Pope employs theatrical imagery in the Dunciad (1743) to attack scientific millennialist ideas which were helping to usher in the eighteenth-century doctrine of man's natural perfectibility. In The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers (1932), Carl L. Becker showed that a crucial part of the process whereby such eighteenth-century philosophers as Voltaire and Diderot "demolished the Heavenly City of St. Augustine only to rebuild it with more up-to-date materials,"¹ consisted in revising the traditional Christian view of man's role on the stage of the world. Noting that the medieval Christian regarded human existence as a "cosmic drama," composed by God "according to a central theme,"² Becker wrote of the Christian concept of man's part in the drama:

Although created perfect, man had through disobedience fallen from grace into sin and error, thereby incurring the penalty of eternal damnation. Yet happily a way of atonement and salvation had been provided through the propitiatory sacrifice of God's only begotten son. Helpless in themselves to avert the just wrath of God, men were yet to be permitted, through his mercy, and by humility and obedience to his will, to obtain pardon for sin and error. Life on earth was but a means to this desired end, a temporary probation for the testing of God's children.

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Further on in his study Becker pointed out how the eighteenth-

century philosophers claimed "that the Christian version of the drama was a false and pernicious one," and sought to displace the Christian version by "recasting it and bringing it up to date." In revising the divine drama,⁴ philosophers like Voltaire and Diderot transformed the idea of Divine Providence into the idea of the automatic processes of "natural law," and the Christian concept of spiritual salvation in the City of God into the concept of man's natural progress towards perfection in a historical utopia on earth. Recent studies have stressed the cardinal place⁵ seventeenth and eighteenth-century notions of a future "scientific" millennial kingdom on earth played in this revision: in the works of such scientific progressivists as Thomas Burnet, for example, man's spiritual salvation was recast into an automatic process of intellectual progress towards perfection in the new millennial world, a process which was depicted by Burnet, in the graphic terms of drama, as the basic plot in man's destiny on the divine stage.

In his discussion of the theatrical elements in the Dunciad, Aubrey Williams has demonstrated how "Pope's theatrical representation of a world of Dulness . . . exists primarily to mirror and measure the broad moral and cultural upheaval of his own time." And Pope's theatrical depiction of a "new world" of "the Kingdom of the Dull upon Earth" satirizes, we will argue, scientific millennialist distortions of the traditional Christian view of man's role

on God's stage. Because Pope's employment of theatrical imagery in the Dunciad, as well as in several other of his major works, contains ontological and moral implications vitally linked to earlier uses of the world-stage concept, this chapter will explore the larger significances of classical, medieval and Renaissance views of the world as a stage.

I

Man's view of himself as an actor on a cosmic stage has primarily represented imaginative expression of his relationship to divine order; such expression has usually reflected, in turn, the moral and practical imperatives by which man confronts the world around him. Important implications for the use of the world-stage concept⁷ perhaps developed first from a metaphor employed by Plato for his view of man as a soul, who having once belonged to the eternal world of Ideas, was now seen entrapped in a prison-body from which he was in a continual process of transmigration towards his former mode of existence.⁸ Plato gave his view of man metaphoric expression in his representation of the cosmos as a divine playworld in which man played his correct part by following right reason, thereby transcending the transitory existence of the body. In the Dialogues (c. 350 B.C.) man is pictured as a puppet of the "just gods," dangled on the strings of disordered affections:

May we not conceive each of us living beings to be a puppet of the Gods, . . . these affections in us like cords and strings which pull us different and opposite directions and to opposite actions.

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The Gods, however, had ordained that man should not remain in this state, where, "by reason of all these affections, the soul, when encased in a mortal body, now, as in the beginning, is at first without intelligence."¹⁰ For "among these cords" there was one, Plato noted, "which every man ought to grasp and never let go, but to pull with it against all the rest: and this is the sacred and golden cord of reason."¹¹ By grasping this sacred cord, man could gradually "vanquish" the "inferior" principles of his bodily affections, and fulfill his "superior" role in the global puppet theatre.¹² Reason, which to Plato could belong only to the "invisible soul,"¹³ had been given to men that they "might behold the courses of intelligence in the heaven, and apply them to the courses of . . . their own intelligence, which are akin to them."¹⁴ And in this divine cosmic show man enacted the "motions" of his true spiritual part in the creation, thus "renewing his original nature" as¹⁵ soul, only by transcending his sensual desires, for

God gave the sovereign part of the human soul to be the divinity of each one, being that part which, as we say, dwells at the top of the body, and inasmuch as we are a plant not of an earthly but of a heavenly growth, raises us from earth to our kindred who are in heaven When a man is always occupied with the cravings of desire and ambition, and is eagerly striving to satisfy them, all his thoughts must be mortal, and, as far as it is possible altogether to become such, he must be mortal every whit, because he has cherished his mortal part.

Plato's comparison of man's existence to a puppet's in order to suggest, paradoxically perhaps, man's ability to overcome his bodily limitations and return to his former spiritual existence was artfully reformulated into an elaborate theatrical metaphor in Plotinus's Third Ennead (c. 270 A.D.). Seeking to account for the existence of evil in a divinely governed universe, Plotinus visualized God as the Poet-Dramatist of a cosmic play in which souls display themselves before a cosmic audience as theatrical performers display themselves before a human audience:

In the dramas of human art, the poet provides the words but the actors add their own quality, good or bad--for they have more to do than merely repeat the author's words--in the truer drama of life which dramatic genius imitates in its degree, The Soul displays itself in a part assigned by the creator of the piece. As the actors of our stages get their mask and their costume, robes of state or rags, so a Soul is allotted its fortunes, not at haphazard but always under a Reason: it adapts itself to the fortunes assigned to it, attunes itself, ranges itself rightly to the drama, to the whole Principle of the piece.

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In demonstrating how the concors discordia of cosmic plenitude was achieved through the harmony "of a drama torn with
18
struggle" Plotinus went on at great length to describe how these souls were tested according to their "personal excellence or defect" in playing the various parts assigned them. And as in Plato's playworld, the "whole Principle" of the divine "piece" in Plotinus's drama centered upon the soul's present encasement in a mortal body and its power to gradually raise itself to its kindred souls in

the heavens. For in his world-stage concept, Plotinus subtly utilized the complex idea of cosmic spectators viewing the "soul-actors" of the divine drama who, in turn, viewed performers in the "dramas of human art," to suggest that if the "soul-actor" properly united itself through right reason to the higher cosmic view, it would see all of man's bodily activities to be as transitory and insignificant as the illusory activities on the human stage.

Noting the evil in men which makes them "attack each other" so that "all is war without a truce," Plotinus says that the "blame for their condition falls on Matter
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dragging them down," and then describes how the soul need not be affected by these "shadowy" activities of the body:

Murders, death in all its guises, the reduction and sacking of cities, all must be to us just such a spectacle as the changing scenes of a play; all is but the varied incident of a plot, costume on and off, acted grief and lament. For on earth, in all the succession of life, it is not the Soul within but the Shadow outside of the authentic man, that grieves and complains and acts out the plot on this world stage which men have dotted with stages of their own constructing. All this /murders, etc./ is the doing of man knowing no more than to live the lower and outer life Anyone that joins in their trifling and so comes to look on life with their eyes must understand that by lending himself to such idleness he has laid aside his own character /I.e., as spirit/.

20

Viewing man's true cosmic role as a spiritual release from the material elements of life threatening the good of the "Soul within," Plotinus admonishes man throughout his Third Ennead to disengage from the sensual, "lower" vanities of human existence and to enter into the part of a divine-like

spectator: on the world-stage man's soul should continually progress into higher spiritual forms until it has completed its career of metempsychoses by assimilation with the Divine Dramatist.²¹ In explaining that some "soul-actors" are urged by a warm "desire for unification" with the Divine Dramatist, and that there is no "grudging in the whole towards the part that grows in goodness and dignity,"²² Plotinus says that these "soul-actors" have a "wide choice of place" in the drama, and can ultimately, through spiritual self-perfection, become "parts of the poet"²³ (*italics mine*). To Plotinus, man's unhappy imprisonment in the flesh was alleviated by his innate freedom to transcend his material nature and, through a series of spiritual reincarnations, reascend the "great chain of being" to his former god-like place among the divine spectators.

In Plotinus's highly influential use of the theatrical analogy, man's present bodily existence was thus intricately linked to the illusory existence of the theatrical performer to suggest man's grandeur in being essentially a spiritual-rational creature. By subtly comparing the external, "shadowy" material elements in man's earthly life to the outward and "unsubstantial" reality of the human actor, Plotinus admonished man that he must, in whatever lot assigned him on the cosmic stage, enact his true role as spirit by a divine-like detachment and transcendence of his bodily elements. And as other classical thinkers used the theat-

rical trope for similar normative views of man's ability to overcome the limitations of his bodily nature, the stage analogy became a favorite vehicle for ethical formulations in the second major school of Greek thought, Stoicism.

By an eclectic fusion of Platonic dualism and Aristotelian teleology (the concept that the end purpose of every being was determined by its created status in nature) Stoicism set forth a highly paradoxical ethics which saw man's submission to world order as the sine qua
²⁴
non of human self-autonomy. In The Enchiridion (c. 150 A.D.) Epictetus emphasized this submission by picturing God as a stage manager, assigning various lots to men:

Remember that you are an actor in a drama, of such a kind as the author pleases to make it. If short, of a short one, if long, of a long one. If it be his pleasure that you should act a poor man, a cripple, a governor, or a private person, see that you act it naturally. For this is your business, to act well the character assigned you; to choose it is another's.

25

And in The Discourses (c. 150 A.D.), Epictetus further utilized the idea of the world as a divine show to suggest man's ability to be a proper "spectator" of the divinely ordered drama in which he was to play. Mingling the Platonic notion of the world as a cosmic show with Aristotelian teleology, Epictetus admonished man to scan the spectacle of creation closely in order to interpret his true part in it:

unless we act in a proper and orderly manner, and conformably to the nature and constitution of each thing, we shall never attain to our true end

God has introduced man to be a spectator of God and His works; and not only a spectator of them, but an interpreter. For this reason it is shameful for man to begin and end where irrational animals do.

26

This passage suggests an important distinction between Stoic and Platonic anthropology: while the Platonist saw man innately free to pass to higher spiritual forms, the Stoic knew him to be limited by his created status in nature. The Stoic, however, also viewed that created status as one in which man must eradicate all sensual desires in order to achieve the serenity of the unperturbed will. Thus while Platonism stressed man's disengagement from the irrational elements of the body as part of its goal of unity with the Divine, Stoicism stressed such disengagement on behalf of its goal of ataraxia, the inner tranquility of the virtuous soul and will.

To the Stoic man could play well his assigned lot as governor or beggar only when he made the will totally insensible to the material, theatrical-like externals of the body, and thus became self-autonomous. Such a view is implicit in Epictetus's description in The Discourses of the testimony the Divine Dramatist demands from both a governor and beggar:

"Assume the governorship of a province." I assume it, and when I have assumed it, I show how an instructed man behaves. "Lay aside the laticlave and, clothing yourself in rags, come forward in this character." What then, have I not the power of displaying a good voice? How, then, do you now appear? As a witness summoned by God. "Come forward, you, and bear testimony for me, for you

are worthy to be brought forward as a witness by me: is anything external to the will good or bad?"
(italics mine)

27

And throughout The Discourses, Epictetus utilizes stage imagery to denote the soul's involvement in a playworld of sensual externalities in order to stress man's rational power to disengage into an undisturbed freedom of the will. From his lofty vantage point and with the higher eye of his imperturbably virtuous will, the Stoic contemplated the material elements of life as so many vanities, insignificant as actions on the human stage:

What is death? A "tragic mask." Turn it and examine it. See, it does not bite. The poor body must be separated from the spirit either now or later. . . . What is pain? A mask. Turn it and examine it. The poor flesh is moved roughly, then, on the contrary, smoothly. If this does not satisfy you, the door is open i.e., through suicide⁷: if it does, bear. For the door ought to be open for all occasions; and so we have no trouble. What then is the fruit of these opinions? It is that which ought to be the most noble and most becoming to those who are really educated, release from perturbation, release from fear, freedom.

28

Stoic use of the stage metaphor to indicate how man could perform his assigned lot on the world-stage only by detached indifference to its sensual externalities also appears in Marcus Aurelius's Meditations (c. 175 A.D.).

In explaining in The Meditations why one need not be "troubled with that which takes place on the larger stage"²⁹ of life, Aurelius says that the soul can prepare itself for its inevitable separation from the body "without tragic show,"³⁰ and points out how such preparation can be achieved

through proper philosophical contemplation:

Acquire the contemplative way of seeing how all things change into one another, and constantly attend to it, and exercise thyself about this part of philosophy. For nothing is so much adapted to produce magnanimity. Such a man has put off the body, and as he sees that he must, no one knows how soon, go away from among men and leave everything here, he gives himself up entirely . . . with acting justly in what he now does, and being satisfied with what is now assigned to him; and he lays aside all distracting and busy pursuits.

31

And in Book III of The Meditations, he compares these distracting pursuits and the "externals" of man's life to "the idle business" of "plays on the stage. . . ." ³²

But the most striking Stoic use of the stage metaphor to suggest man's need to stand apart from sensual pressures occurs in Seneca's Moral Epistles to Lucilius (62-64 A.D.). In Moral Epistle, 76, Seneca, noting how the body's pleasures only "depress the soul and weaken it, and when we think that they are uplifting the soul, they are merely puffing it up and cheating it with much emptiness," ³³

compares these empty pleasures to an actor's trappings:

None of those whom you behold clad in purple is happy, anymore than one of those actors upon whom the play bestows a sceptre and a cloak while on the stage; . . . this is the reason why we are imposed upon: we value no man at what he is, but add to the man himself the trappings in which he is clothed. But when you wish to inquire into a man's true worth, and to know what manner of man he is, look at him when he is naked; make him lay aside his inherited estate, his titles, and the other deceptions of fortune. Let him strip off his body.

34

And in Moral Epistle, 80, Seneca again uses the stage metaphor to stress man's power to disassociate himself from

the "play-acting" sensualities of life:

I often feel called upon to use the following illustration, and it seems to me that none expresses more effectively the drama of human life, wherein we are assigned the parts we are to play so badly. Yonder is the man who stalks upon the stage with swelling port and head thrown back. . . . You may speak in the same way of all these dandies whom you see riding in litters above the heads of men and above the crowd; in every case their happiness is put on like the actor's mask. Tear it off, and you will scorn them.

35

In Platonic and Stoic thought the trope of man the cosmic actor thus represented an intricate symbolic construct for its views of man's place in the universe--in a world of external values and masking deceits, of evanescent joys and mutable fortunes, man's existence was linked to the "sham" reality of the human actor's brief show for various ethical purposes. Both Platonic and Stoic uses of the stage metaphor contained the basic idea that God had assigned men various lots to play on the cosmic stage. And while the former emphasized an ethics of the soul's aspiration towards unity with the Divine, the latter stressed an ethics of the soul's submission to world order through ataraxia. Confronted with the "spectacle" of the world, right reason taught both schools that in order to perform their assigned lots well they must stand apart from the vanities of lower, sensual existence, for such vanities constituted an unsubstantial play of counterfeit joys and passions. Such disengagement, in their schemes, involved extirpating the animal elements within their nature,

and tearing off all masks of deceit and self-delusion impeding the soul's interior perfection. These objectives, suprahuman as they were, inevitably encountered philosophic opposition.

In strict opposition to Stoicism, the third major school of Greek thought, Epicureanism, posited a sensualistic ethics: intent on giving the lie to Stoic ideals of disengagement, Epicureanism stressed the value of man's sensual drives in the name of an ethics of "right pleasure." From out of this dialogue over man's nature there gradually emerged a via media position--a blending of Epicurean and Stoic doctrines under the banner of a common sense, anti-rationalistic philosophy. This via media position appears most vividly in the writings of the second-century satirist, Lucian of Samosata, whose moral sensibility was rooted in a highly skeptical view of human capabilities.³⁶

In his Dialogue Menippus (c. 165 A.D.) Lucian pictures his hero descending to Hades in order to learn from Tiresias how to live well; and Menippus's experiences in the underworld give him this insight into man's life:

When I saw all this, the life of man came before me under the likeness of a great pageant, arranged and marshalled by Chance, who distributed infinitely varied costumes to the performers. She would take one and array him like a king, with tiara, bodyguard, and crown complete; another she dressed like a slave; one was adorned with beauty, another got up as a ridiculous hunchback; there must be all kinds in the show. . . . The play over, each of them throws off his gold-spangled robe and his mask, descends from the buskin's height, and moves a mean ordinary creature.

In portraying life as a stage-like illusion under the direction of "Chance," Lucian emphasizes throughout Menippus man's folly in believing he is gifted to remove himself from the comic incongruities of the human "show." Near the beginning of the dialogue, he particularly satirizes a Stoic philosopher, who advises Menippus to bring "the body under," and to "be filthy and squalid, disgusting and abusive."³⁸ And, at the end of the dialogue, Lucian explains "what is the best life" in this global pageantry of disguises man finds himself in:

The life of the ordinary man is the best and most prudent choice; cease from the folly of metaphysical speculation and inquiry into origins and ends, utterly reject their clever logic, count all these things idle talk, and pursue one end alone--how you may do what your hand finds to do.

39

By employing the stage metaphor as a vital part of the dialogue's anti-rationalistic vein of skepticism, Lucian uniquely utilized the metaphor to qualify earlier glorifications of man as being essentially a spiritual-rational creature. With the Greek ethos sinking into extinction before the "Good News" of Christianity, this kind of classical skepticism advised man to play out the role which "Chance" had created for him, and to accept his sensual vanities, as well as the fact that he was, like it or not, "masked" in pretensions and self-deception.

II

Classical ethical norms were radically modified within the Christian scheme of Divine Grace, human corruption and redemption, for this scheme brought the "foolish" doctrine that wisdom was the "crucified Christ," whose Grace alone allowed man to triumph over the "law of sin" which was ceaselessly "warring against the law of mind" within man (Romans, 7. 20-3). In introducing these new properties of Grace and Sin onto the cosmic stage, Christianity envisioned human existence as a brief, divinely plotted drama in which man played for eternal salvation by acknowledging himself as both the destined heir of Heaven and the son of fallen Adam. Utilizing a basic theological pattern of glory, ruin and restoration, an indissoluble bond of human grandeur and misère was thus presupposed at both the ontological and moral levels: created perfect, in a dual state of body and soul, actually fallen, potentially redeemed, man remained ambiguously poised between the spiritual and corporeal worlds, and between eternal salvation and eternal damnation.

Christianity also radically refashioned Platonic and Stoic concepts of a divine and human ordre naturel by viewing human self-glorification as a dead end in man's goal of salvation. To the Christian, "right reason" was found only in the self-knowledge of a fallen but redeemable man, who, remaining a limited part of Nature, was free to forge his

own final destiny of endless joy or misery by acceptance or rejection of grace. Substituting the virtues of charity and humility, and the doctrine of reason-within-the-bounds-of-faith, for Platonic and Stoic ideals of the self-autonomy of the soul and the self-sufficiency of reason, Christianity primarily sought to humble fallen man in order to show him the way to his true restoration in Christ. Christian medieval uses of the stage metaphor graphically reflect this altered view of man's ability to overcome his inherited lot on earth: to the "sinner" on the world stage, restoration from his fallen condition (affecting both his rational and animal elements) could be achieved only by a humble awareness of his own imperfections, charity, and patient trust in Divine Grace directing his complex nature towards its true goal of salvation.

In his Exposition on Psalm, 128 (c. 395), St. Augustine thus utilizes the theatrical metaphor to show how man could perform his role of salvation only through the power of sanctifying grace and the redeeming forces of humility and charity. Commenting on the first line of this psalm,⁴⁰ "Blessed are all they that fear the Lord, and walk in His ways," Augustine points out how man, walking in God's ways through fear of his own sinfulness and in imitation of Christ's humility and charity, would be exalted in the future Jerusalem;⁴¹ and he then compares man's present lot to a stage-play:

Boys when born speak somewhat like this to their parents: "Now then, begin to think of removing hence, let us too play our parts on the stage." For the whole life of temptation in the human race is a stage play; for it is said, Everyman living is altogether vanity. Nevertheless, if we rejoice in children who will succeed us; how much must we rejoice in children with whom we shall remain, and in that Father for Whom we are born, Who will not die, but that we may evermore live with Him? These are the good things of Jerusalem.

42

In this portrait of man's "whole life of temptation" on earth as a "Vanity Fair" stage play, Augustine richly evokes the pathos of fallen man's inherent frailties, frailties which could only be overcome by an Imitatio Dei.

In Book II of his De Libero Arbitrio (c. 396), Augustine, echoing Plato's idea of the world as a divine show, also suggests how man, the spectator of God's world, can properly scan the divine spectacle:

O Wisdom /I.e., God/ . . . thou ceapest not to suggest to us what and how great thou art. Thy pleasure is the whole glory of created beings. An artificer somehow suggests to the spectator of his work, through the very beauty of the work itself, not to be wholly content with that beauty alone, but to let his eyes so scan the form of the material thing made that he may remember with affection him who made it.

43

But, unlike Plato, Augustine stresses, in the following passages, the goodness and value of man's bodily nature in the creation: "If, then, we find among the good things of the body, some that a man can abuse, . . . we can not on that account say that they ought not to have been given, since we admit that they are good . . . and could

only have been given by him from whom all good things
come." ⁴⁴ And further on in this same work Augustine also
sets forth the fundamental Christian understanding of
man's position in the divine show:

As we are born from the first pair to a mortal
life of ignorance and toil because they sinned
and fell into a state of error, misery and
death, so it most justly pleased the most high
God, Governor of all things, to manifest from
the beginning, from man's origin, his justice
in exacting punishment, and in human history
his mercy in remitting punishment.

45

The essential elements in Augustine's view of man's
true role on the world-stage reappeared some six centuries
later, in the work of the medieval Christian humanist,
John of Salisbury. Throughout five chapters of his
Policraticus (1159), John makes elaborate use of theatrical
metaphor to show how man could play his part in God's
divine drama only through recognition of his own imperfec-
tions and humble submission to Divine Providence. Like
Augustine, John visualizes sinful man engaged in a stage-
play of vanity:

everything that takes place in the seething mob
of the irreligious is more like comedy than real
life. . . . "I have seen," says Ecclesiastes,
"all things that are done under the sun, and
behold, all is vanity," and this is because all
things that withdraw from the firm ground of truth
become subject to the vanity which so graces
our comedy. . . .

46

And, in noting how man acts in this cosmic comedy in the
"sight of God" and "of his angels," John also stresses
fallen man's need for patient trust in God's divine
purposes:

47

As long as peace is absent from the sons of Adam, who have been born to labor, prepared for flagellation, conceived in sin, reared in toil, rushing rather than traveling toward death, than which there is no sadder sight, patience is necessary, an effective consolation which, derived from the balm of joy in the conscience and from the boundless clemency of God, fosters and strengthens those predestined for life by inspiring them with hope of the future.

48

But in using the world-stage concept in Policraticus, John also places a new and crucial emphasis on the role of self-knowledge in humbling man to recognize his limitations on the cosmic stage. To John, "the life of man is a comedy, where each forgetting his own plays another's⁴⁹role" (italics mine), since man, through a prideful lack of self-knowledge, continually refuses to accept his assigned role and seeks, instead, a more exalted one.

In observing how the "first task of man aspiring to wisdom is the consideration of what he himself is," John insists that true self-knowledge should teach man, first and foremost, that "without grace we can do nothing" and that "pride is verily the root of all evils and the fuel that⁵⁰ feeds the fires of death." Such a lack of self-knowledge, John noted, caused the pagans to be

somewhat careless in that, amidst such light /Divine illumination/ cast upon things, they attained to no knowledge of themselves and lost the knowledge of the light inaccessible; being vain in their thoughts and professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and their foolish heart was darkened.

51

And, in depicting, in Chapter IX of the Policraticus, how

the just and the angels attentively view the world comedy of life--"They view the world-comedy along with Him who towers above to watch ceaselessly over men, their deeds and their aspirations"⁵²--Salisbury further illustrated this lack of self-knowledge in speaking of classical notions of self-glorification:

God forbid that any glorieth except him who glorieth in the Lord; for not he who commendeth himself or men commend is approved, but he whom God commendeth; and this approval is won only by real virtue, not by its semblance however striking. This last comprises, I believe, all distinction in character due to natural endowment and the exercise of mental power without grace, which philosophers promise themselves as reward. For this very reason they become vain in their thoughts . . . and professing themselves wise, they become fools.

53

Thus, while in the ethical perspective of the Platonist or the Stoic, man was seen to misplay his true role in the divine drama as a result of lack of rational-spiritual self-perfection, to the Christian, man misplayed his part as the result of a lack of proper self-knowledge of his own fallen but redeemable human condition. An essential part of the Christian view of man's role on the cosmic stage thus centered upon humbling proud man through the process of self-knowledge: in cautioning him against the despair of playing a less exalted role than that of a potential inheritor of Heaven, Christian self-knowledge, rooted as it was in the doctrine of religious humility, more often operated to admonish man against the ancient satanic presumption of desiring a more exalted, self-sufficient role on the cosmic stage.

III

During the early Renaissance subtle alterations in the Christian view of man gradually arose as the result of a new optimism over human capabilities, an optimism which stemmed primarily from Platonic and Stoic emphases on man as being essentially a spiritual-rational creature. The stage metaphor afforded a vehicle for the expression of this optimism, as well as for the central Renaissance humanist effort to retain the Christian concept of man's limitations on the stage of a fallen world.

One of the most imaginative products of this Renaissance optimism in man's spiritual and rational capabilities is found in Juan Lius Vives' A Fable About Man (1518), a work which in its turn was profoundly indebted to the philosophical concepts of the Italian humanist, Pico Della Mirandola.⁵⁴ In his Oration on the Dignity of Man (1486), Pico elaborated upon the Plotinian concept of the soul's freedom to pass through the entire spectrum of being, from the lowest to the highest forms, by stressing man's unlimited, Protean-like power of transformation. God, Pico wrote in his Oration, "took man as a creature of indeterminate nature" and "addressed him thus":⁵⁵

Neither a fixed abode nor a form that is thine alone nor any function peculiar to thyself have we given thee, Adam. . . . Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life,

which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power,
out of thy soul's judgment, to be reborn into
the higher forms, which are divine.

56

In celebrating man's "indeterminate" role in the creation, Pico, as Paul Oskar Kristeller points out in his introduction to the Oration, placed great emphasis on man's liberty: "Man is the only creature whose life is determined not by nature but by his own free choice; and thus man no longer occupies a fixed though distinguished place in the hierarchy of being but exists outside this hierarchy as a kind of separate world."⁵⁷ Pico's notion of man's unfixed place in the hierarchy of being can be seen as an important shift in perspective from the medieval Christian view of man's fixed ontological status as an intermediate creature sharing attributes of both the spiritual and corporeal worlds; moreover, in Pico's unqualified stress on man's freedom, as Hiram Haydn notes, "the limiting principle of the Christian humanist's concept of the only true liberty being the liberty to go good, which is both God's will for man and man's distinctive good, is broken down and replaced by a really autonomous conception of the will, an unlimited freedom of choice."⁵⁸

This Renaissance Platonic alteration in the traditional Christian conception of man is graphically reflected in Vives' portrait of the world as a theatre under the direction of a divine stage manager (clothed in the mythical garb of Jupiter) who creates a spectacle for the enjoyment of a celestial audience:

All of a sudden, at a command of almighty Jupiter, by whom alone all things are done, this whole world appeared, so large, so elaborate, so diversified, and beautiful in places, just as you see it. This was the amphitheater: uppermost, to wit in the skies, were the stalls and seats of the divine spectators; nethermost--some say in the middle--the earth was placed as a stage for the appearance of the actors, along with all the animals and everything else.

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As in Pico's (and Plotinus's) conception of human nature, Vives' emphasis is also on man's unlimited freedom to take new forms of being:

They [~~the~~ gods] saw man, Jupiter's mime, be all things also. He would change himself so as to appear under the mask of a plant, acting a simple life without any power of sensation. Soon after, he withdrew and returned . . . into the shapes of a thousand wild beasts: namely, the angry and raging lion, the rapacious and devouring wolf. . . . After doing this, he was out of sight for a short time; then the curtain was drawn back and he returned a man.

60

Finally, Vives' "wonder-actor" is seen transcending these lower "shapes" by means of his rational faculties to become reborn into the "higher forms which are divine":

The gods were not expecting to see him [man] in more shapes when, behold, he was remade into one of their own race, surpassing the nature of man and relying entirely upon a very wise mind. . . . Thus man was recalled from the stage, seated by Mercury among the gods, and proclaimed victor.

61

As an expression of extreme faith in human reason, Vives' Fable mirrors sixteenth-century Renaissance tendencies to minimize man's limitations on the cosmic stage. But while Vives adapted Plotinus's use of the world-stage theme to suggest the soul's rational powers to divest

itself of its lower bodily forms, "middle-path humanists like More and Erasmus,"⁶² also employed the stage metaphor to uphold the Christian humanist ideal of limitation. In his Utopia (1516), More thus tempered early Renaissance enthusiasm for human perfectibility by stressing man's need to play his assigned part on the stage of an imperfect world. In More's dialogue the voice of idealistic faith in man, presented by the persona of Hythloday, is countered by the cautious voice of More, the Christian realist, who cannot overlook the effects of original sin upon man. In rebuking Hythloday in Book I of the Utopia for his refusal to serve a corrupt court, More points to the only practical solution a Christian can bring to the problem of evil in the world:

But ther is an other philosophye more civile, whyche knoweth, as ye wolde say, her owne stage, and thereafter orderynge and behavinge herselfe in the playe that she hathe in hande, playethe her parte accordinglye with comlyenes, utteringe nothings oute of dewe ordre and fassyon. And thys ys the phylosophye that you muste use. . . . For by bryngynge in other stuffe that nothings apperteyneth to the presente matter, you muste nedes marre and pervert the play that is in hand, though the stuffe that you brynge be muche better. What part soever you have taken upon you, playe that aswel as you canne, and make the best of it: And doe not therefore disturbe and brynge out of ordre the whole matter, bycause that an other, whyche is meryer and better, cummeth to your remembraunce.

And in More's theatre-world, the whole principle of the divine piece centers upon man's need to range himself rightly to his position in a fallen world:

Yf evel opinions and noughty persuasions can not be utterly and quyte plucked out of their /Kings' hartes, if you can not even as you wolde remedy vices, which use and custome hath confirmed: yet for this cause you must not leave and forsake the common wealthe. . . . For it is not possible for al thynges to be well, onles all men were good. Which I thinke wil not be yet thies good many yeares.

64

Hythloday's truculent refusal to accept the fact that the world is full of "craftye wyle" tends to disturb the divine plot of God's providence for the world; his refusal mars the "whole matter" of the cosmic play by his desire to escape from man's imperfect nature. In his role as the cautious and realistic interlocutor in the Utopia, More exhibits, then, the Christian humanist's awareness that as long as the "law of sin" is upon the sons of Adam, man must play out his role of regeneration in patient trust that the "whole matter" is in the deeper counsel of Heaven.

In The Praise of Folly (1511), a work which is generally recognized as the product of one of the most complex and supple of Renaissance minds, Erasmus also uses the stage metaphor to qualify Renaissance fervor over human greatness. Thus in a section near the middle of the satire, Stultitia employs the Lucianic image of life as a play to demonstrate that the imprudent man would be he who sought to strip off all the disguises making up the fabric of life:

65

If a person were to try stripping the disguises from actors while they play a scene upon the

stage, showing to the audience their real looks and the faces they were born with, would not such a one spoil the whole play?

But suppose, right here, some wise man who has dropped down from the sky should suddenly confront me and cry out that the person whom the world has accepted as a god and a master is not even a man, because he is driven sheep-like by his passions. . . . I ask you, what would he get by it, except to be considered by everyone as insane and raving? As nothing is more foolish than wisdom out of place, so nothing is more imprudent than unseasonable prudence. . . . The part of a truly prudent man, on the contrary, is (since we are mortal) not to aspire to wisdom beyond his station, and either, along with the rest of the crowd, pretend not to notice anything, or affably and companionably be deceived. But that, they tell us, is folly. Indeed, I shall not deny it; only let them, on their side, allow that it is also to play out the comedy of life.

66

In the following passage, Stultitia identifies her principal adversary as the Stoic ideal of the emotionless man:

Thus the Stoics take away from the wise man all perturbations of the soul, as so many diseases. Yet these passions not only discharge the office of mentor and guide to such as are pressing toward the gate of wisdom, but they also assist in every exercise of virtue as spurs and goads--persuaders, as it were--to well doing. Although that double-strength Stoic, Seneca, stoutly denies this, subtracting from the wise man any and every emotion, yet in doing so he leaves him no man at all but rather a new kind of god, or demiurgos, who never existed and will never emerge.

67

Erasmus's satirical thrust is aimed here at that type of "wisdom" espoused by the Stoic-like rationalist, "insensible to any natural sympathy, no more moved by feelings of love or pity than if he were solid flint or Marpesian stone." Redefining "prudence" on behalf of Christian

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"right reason," and questioning reason's claims in order to emerge with the wisdom of man's limited role on the world-stage, Erasmus shows how imperfect man is more often taken up with disguises than reality, and how no man can truly become an unconcerned spectator of the human comedy of life. In using the stage metaphor in The Praise of Folly, Erasmus richly expresses the central Christian humanist concern with humbling man in order to show him where his true ethical objectives lie--in the paradoxical wisdom of Christian patience and understanding of human imperfections.

Several critics have recently stressed the large influence which the concept of the world as a divine stage had on the Elizabethan mind. Roy W. Battenhouse, for example, has pointed out how the "Elizabethans were awed and inspired by the idea that God was a dramatist," and that "this world was His stageplay";⁷⁰ and Thomas Stroup has gone as far as to claim that "by the time of Elizabeth I," the world-stage concept "had come to be a more widespread metaphor for the expression of the Elizabethan World-Picture than the Great Chain of Being or the bee hive."⁷¹ During the late sixteenth century in England, as the result of this pervasive Elizabethan view of the world as a divine stage-play, the gravid implications of the idea of the human drama being contained within a larger divine play were artfully employed on the Elizabethan stage. By subtly using the idea of the play as a mirror of the

larger world of human existence, Elizabethan drama, at its greatest, figured forth for its audience the nature of their own true role in God's divine theatre.

In The Idea of a Theatre Francis Fergusson showed how the Elizabethan stage was a symbolic representation of the Elizabethan view of the world as "an ordered universe arranged in a fixed system of hierarchies but modified by man's sin and the hope of his redemption,"⁷² and was "thus taken both as the physical and the metaphysical 'scene' of man's life."⁷³ The "metaphysical scene" of man's relationship to divine order was, perhaps,⁷⁴ most brilliantly emblemized in Elizabethan drama under the canopy encircling the scenes of Hamlet (c. 1602). Here, the idea of the play as a metaphoric reflector of the "real" world,

. . . the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure,⁷⁵

is artfully used by Shakespeare to symbolize man's limited role in the mysterious, divine reality governing the "real" world of human existence. For as the "inner" play of the Gonzago interlude mirrors the truth concerning the world of Elsinore, this latter "stage-world," in turn, is made to reveal the truth of man's proper role in the greater divine "stage-play" of life.

The world of Hamlet is, as Maynard Mack has cogently demonstrated, a "world of riddles"; and in this world,⁷⁶

Hamlet, exemplifying the mystery of the "human predicament . . . between the glory of having been made in God's image and the incrimination of being descended from fallen Adam,"⁷⁷ is tested in accepting the fact that he must play on a stage whose manager has set limits on his ability to cut through the tangle of human frailties.⁷⁸ Hamlet learns, in short, that he is acting not on his own stage, but on God's, where, though he is "a little soil'd i' th' working," there is a higher direction leading him to his true goal. Mack comments on the basic transformation which takes place in Hamlet in the last act of the play:

The point is that he Hamlet has now learned, and accepted, the boundaries in which human action, human judgment, are enclosed. Till his return from the voyage he had been trying to act beyond these, had been encroaching on the role of providence. . . . Now, he has learned that there are limits to the before and after that human reason can comprehend. Rashness, even, is sometimes good. Through rashness he has saved his life from the commission for his death, "and prais'd be rashness for it." This happy circumstance and the unexpected arrival of the pirate ship make it plain that the roles of life are not entirely self-assigned. "There is a divinity that shapes our ends, Roughhew them how we will."

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On God's world stage, then, all is right because the quality of God's grace is not strained, not because man can walk out of the maze of self-illusions and deceptions which make up his brief moment in the divine drama.

Shakespeare's central Christian humanist concept of man's limitations also appears, perhaps in its most vivid and compelling form, in his last major play, The Tempest (c. 1612). In an introduction to The Tempest, Frank Kermode

has shown how a major theme in the play involves Prospero's restoration to divine order:

Prospero, like Adam, fell from his kingdom by an inordinate thirst for knowledge; but learning is a great aid to virtue, the road by which we may love and imitate God, . . . and by its means he is enabled to return.

80

This restorative "learning" process in Prospero fundamentally involves, as in Hamlet's case, an acceptance of the inescapable, built-in limits of man's role on God's stage--throughout the play we see Prospero tested to accept the fact that, as E. M. W. Tillyard puts it, "man for all striving towards the angels can never be quit utterly of the bestial, of the Caliban, within him."

81

In Act I of The Tempest we hear how Prospero "cast" his assigned lot as Duke of Milan on his brother Antonio:

The government I cast upon my brother,
And to my state grew stranger, being transported
And rapt in secret studies. . . .

(I, II, ll. 75-7)

The nature of Prospero's "secret studies," and the magic powers he possesses as the result of his desire for a new "state" has been also shown by Kermode to be intimately connected to Neo-Platonic notions of man's ascent to angelhood. Like Prospero, "whose Art is to achieve supremacy over the natural world by holy magic,"

82

The Neo-Platonic mage studies the harmonic relationship of the elementary, celestial and intellectual worlds. . . . His object is to "walk to the skie," as Vaughan put it, before death, by ascending through the created worlds to the condition of the angels. His Art is

supernatural; the spirits he commands are the daemons of Neo-Platonism.

83

And in Act IV of the play we see how the angelic-like powers of Prospero's art make him a kind of divine stage impresario of his island world, allowing him to "enact his present fancies" in an impressive masque-like spectacle of mythological figures. While creating this show "to bestow upon the eyes" of Ferdinand and Miranda "some vanity" (IV, II, l. 40) of his Art, Prospero suddenly remembers Caliban, and, with a "vex'd" and "troubled" brain, he lays down his magic arts and dismisses the actors of his "show":

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep. Sir, I am vex'd;
Bear with my weakness; my old brain is troubled.
(IV, I, ll. 148-159)

Prospero, who until this moment in the play seemed totally unlimited in his power and freedom to shape his own destiny, now sees that he cannot be "quit utterly of the bestial, of the Caliban, within him." He now learns, like Hamlet, that there are limits to human capabilities, and that man must act on God's stage in a role which is not "entirely self-assigned."

In the last act of The Tempest, Prospero is seen acknowledging his creaturely limitations by acknowledging Caliban--"this thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine" (V, I, ll. 275-6)--and thus accepting the proper bounds in which he must act in God's world. "Restored" through proper self-knowledge from his false part as the angel-like creator-spectator of the island world, Prospero now returns to Milan to take on the more ennobling part of a man humbly working his way on the world-stage through the labyrinths of the human mystery towards its Divine Director. But while the Christian humanist ethos and its traditional view of the drama of salvationist history found their deepest expression in Shakespeare's imaginative art, other forces were subtly at work transforming the meaning of that drama.

Notes

1. The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers, 4th ed. (New Haven, Conn., 1961), p. 31.
2. Ibid., p. 7.
3. Ibid., p. 6.
4. Ibid., p. 123.
5. Cf. Ernest Lee Tuveson, Millennium and Utopia: A Study in the Background of the Idea of Progress (New York, 1964), esp. pp. ix-xii and 154ff. Any investigation of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scientific millennialist movement follows in the wake of Tuveson's important study. Further debt is owed Miss Majorie Hope Nicolson's discussion of Thomas Burnet in her Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite (New York, 1959).
6. Pope's Dunciad: A Study of Its Meaning (London, 1955), p. 98.
7. General discussions of classical, medieval and Renaissance examples of the world-stage concept appear in Jean Jacquot, "Le Théâtre Du Monde de Shakespeare à Calderón," Revue de Littérature Comparée, XXXI (1957), 341-72; Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York, 1963), pp. 138-144; and Minos Kokolakis, The Dramatic Simile of Life (Athens, 1960).
8. In his account of The Greeks and Their Gods (Boston, 1956), William Keith Chambers Guthrie explains Plato's anthropological view: "Plato affirmed that the soul is indeed to be cherished as the most important part of us, for it belongs in essence to the eternal world and not the transitory. It has had many lives, and before and between them, when out of the body, has had glimpses of the reality beyond. Death is not an evil for it, but a release from imprisonment in the body enabling it to fly back to the world of Ideas with which it had converse before its life on earth. . . . Philosophy is 'a preparation for death,' in that it fits the soul

to stay permanently in the world of the Ideas instead of being condemned to return once more to the limitations of a mortal frame" (pp. 346-7).

9. Laws, I, 644, trans. Benjamin Jowett, in The Dialogues of Plato, in Great Books of the Western World, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago, 1952), vol. VII, p. 650.
10. Timaeus, 44, trans. Benjamin Jowett, in The Dialogues of Plato, in Great Books of the Western World, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago, 1952), vol. VII, p. 454.
11. Laws, I, 644, p. 650.
12. Cf. Laws, I, 644-5, p. 650.
13. Cf. Timaeus, 46, p. 455.
14. Timaeus, 47, p. 455.
15. Timaeus, 90, p. 476.
16. Ibid.
17. Third Ennead, Tract II, 17, trans. Stephen MacKenna and B. S. Page, in Plotinus: The Six Enneads, in Great Books of the Western World (Chicago, 1952), vol. XVII, p. 92.
18. Ibid., Tract II, 16, p. 91.
19. Ibid., Tract II, 15, p. 89. In those passages of the Third Ennead containing the stage metaphor, Plotinus continually lays the blame for man's "wrong-doing" on "the attached body with its inevitable concomitant of desire" (II, 4, p. 85).
20. Ibid., Tract II, 15, p. 90.
21. These passages are replete with such descriptions of metempsychoses as "the transmutation of living things," and the "transformation of living beings one into another" (II, 15, p. 90).
22. Ibid., Tract II, 14, p. 89.
23. Ibid., Tract II, 18, p. 92.
24. In his An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture (New Haven, Conn., 1962), Ernst Cassirer notes that the greatest merit of the "Stoic

conception of man lies in the fact that this conception gives to man both a deep feeling of his harmony with nature and his moral independence of nature" (p. 8).

25. The Enchiridion or Manual, of Epictetus, in The Moral Discourses of Epictetus, trans. Elizabeth Carter (London, New York, 1913), p. 260.
26. The Discourses of Epictetus, Book I, Chapter 6, trans. George Long, in Great Books of the Western World (Chicago, 1952), vol. XII, p. 111.
27. Ibid., Book I, Chapter 29, pp. 136-7.
28. Ibid., Book II, Chapter I, p. 139.
29. The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, Book XI, 6, trans. George Long, in Great Books of the Western World (Chicago, 1952), vol. XII, p. 302.
30. Ibid., Book XI, 3, p. 302.
31. Ibid., Book X, 11, p. 298. Plato's general influence on Aurelius's concept of putting off the body through contemplation can be seen in the following excerpts from The Meditations: "Look around at the courses of the stars, as if thou wert going along with them; and constantly consider the changes of the elements into one another; for such thoughts purge away the filth of the terrene life. This is a fine saying of Plato: That he who is discoursing about men should look also at earthly things as if he viewed them from some higher place. . . ." (Book VII, p. 282); "Remember that this /soul/ which pulls the strings is the thing which is hidden within: this is life, this, if one may so say, is man. In contemplating thyself never include the vessel /body/ which surrounds thee. . . ." (Book X, p. 301).
32. Ibid., Book VII, 3, pp. 279-80.
33. Moral Epistle, 76, in Seneca's Moral Epistles to Lucilius, trans. Richard M. Gummere (London, New York, 1930), vol. II, p. 157.
34. Ibid., pp. 165, 167.
35. Ibid., pp. 217, 219.
36. Cf. "Introduction" to The Works of Lucian of Samosata, trans. H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler (Oxford, 1905), vol. I, pp. xxivff.

37. Ibid., p. 164.
38. Ibid., p. 158.
39. Ibid., p. 167.
40. This Christian use of the theatrical metaphor to underline man's need of humility and charity appears also in St. John Chrysostom's homily, De Lazaro concio, II (c. 400). In the latter, Chrysostom stresses the prime importance of charity, and humble obedience to God's will in man's present life on earth, and then depicts this life in terms of a global stage play: "Quemadmodum enim instante vespera, digressisque qui consederant, ubi fuerint e theatro egressi, habitumque fabulae deposuerint: qui prius reges ac duces esse videbantur, post apparent hoc quod sunt: ita sane et nunc, postquam mors advenit, theatrumque dimissum fuerit, cum divitiarum paupertatisque personas deposuerint, omnes illuc profecti, atque ex solis operibus judicati, declarant qui vere sint divites, qui vere pauperes: qui honorati, et qui obscuri." De Lazaro concio, II, 3, in S. Joannis Chrysostomi Opera, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, Patrologiæ Graeca (Paris, 1859), vol. XLVIII, p. 986, col. 2.
Cited by Jean Jacquot, "Le Théâtre Du Monde de Shakespeare à Calderón," Revue de Littérature Comparée, p. 354.
41. Cf. Exposition on Psalm, 128, in Expositions on The Book of Psalms by S. Augustine, trans. C. Marriott, in A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and the West (Oxford, 1857), vol. XXXIX, pp. 35-41.
42. Ibid., pp. 46-47.
43. De Libero Arbitrio, Book II, Chapter XVII, 43, trans. John H. S. Burleigh, in The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia, 1953), vol. VI, p. 162.
44. Ibid., Book II, Chapter XVIII, 48, p. 165.
45. Ibid., Book III, Chapter XX, 55, p. 203.
46. Policraticus, Chapter VIII, trans. as Frivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers by Joseph B. Pike (Minneapolis, London, 1938), pp. 171-2, 176.
47. Ibid., Chapter IX, p. 175.
48. Ibid., Chapter VIII, p. 175.
49. Ibid., Chapter VIII, p. 171.

50. Ibid., Chapters II and III, pp. 155-7. "There is," John observes in these passages on self-knowledge, "an oracle of Apollo which is thought to have come down from the skies; Noti seliton, that is, Know thyself" (p. 156).
51. Ibid., Chapter II, p. 156.
52. Ibid., Chapter IX, p. 180.
53. Ibid., Chapter IX, pp. 177-8.
54. In her "Introduction" to A Fable About Man, Nancy Lenkeith points out that Vives' Fable "is directly based on Pico's conception of the dignity of man" (The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, ed. Ernst Cassirer, et al./Chicago, 1948/, p. 385).
55. Oration on the Dignity of Man, trans. Elizabeth Livermore Forbes, in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, pp. 224-5.
56. Ibid., p. 225.
57. Ibid., p. 219.
58. The Counter-Renaissance (New York, 1950), p. 349.
59. A Fable About Man, in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, p. 387.
60. Ibid., p. 389.
61. Ibid., pp. 389-390.
62. See Hiram Haydn, The Counter-Renaissance, p. 351.
63. The Utopia of Sir Thomas More: Ralph Robinson's Translation with Roper's Life of More and Some of His Letters, ed. George Sampson (London, 1910), pp. 69-70.
64. Ibid., pp. 70-1.
65. Lucian's general influence on Erasmus, and in particular his use of the stage metaphor, is noted by Hoyt Hopenwell Hudson in his "Introduction" to The Praise of Folly (Princeton, 1944): "By 1505 Erasmus and Thomas More, who may have discovered this author /i.e., Lucian/ before Erasmus did, were at work translating dialogues of Lucian into Latin, and thirty-two of their versions (of which twenty-eight were by Erasmus) were printed by Badius in Paris, 1506. . . . Some years after he had published The Praise of Folly he wrote to a friend

that it was Thomas More's fondness for wit and fun, 'and especially for Lucian,' that prompted him to write this book. The early part is Lucianic in its scoffing at the gods of mythology; and farther on Erasmus borrows from Lucian the view. . . of the world . . . compared to a stage" (pp. xviii-xix).

66. Ibid., pp. 37-8.

67. Ibid., p. 39.

68. Ibid.

69. Cf. Walter Kaiser, Praisers of Folly: Erasmus, Rabelais, Shakespeare, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), vol. XXV, pp. 61-2.

70. Roy W. Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine: A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy (Nashville, Tenn., 1941), p. 124.

71. Thomas B. Stroup, "The Testing Pattern in Elizabethan Tragedy," Studies in English Literature: 1500-1900, III (1963), 176.

72. E(ustace) M(andeville) W(etenhall) Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture: A Study of the Idea of Order in the Age of Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton (New York, 1961), pp. 5-6, quoted by Fergusson in his The Idea of a Theatre: A Study of Ten Plays, The Art of Drama in Changing Perspective (Princeton, N.J., 1949), p. 116.

73. The Idea of a Theatre, p. 116.

74. This "metaphysical scene," had also, of course, been set forth in both the medieval cycle and morality plays. In presenting their panoramic sagas of the Christian history of the race, the medieval cycle plays, strophe, as Anne Righter explains in her Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play (New York, 1962), to dramatize the fundamental Christian theological view of man: "Every moment of the mystery cycle was designed to affirm the theological involvement of Mankind with the events represented on the stage, to render each spectator vividly aware of his inheritance of guilt and the possibility of his redemption by stressing his participation in the most significant moments of Biblical history" (p. 19). As a result of this intimate involvement, "Adam," "Abraham" and "Herod" of the cycle play could be seen moving across the scaffolds of the stage, tested for their fitness for salvation as all the sons of Adam were tested by the Divine

Dramatist on the larger stage of the world. Professor Stroup has shown how a similar testing pattern was developed in the morality play, in which Everyman was tested to see "whether he might bring himself to submit to God's will and thus gain His grace and receive the mercy which would enable him to achieve salvation" ("The Testing Pattern in Elizabethan Tragedy," p. 178).

75. Hamlet, Act III, Scene II, ll. 22-7, in The Plays and Sonnets of William Shakespeare, ed. William G. Clarke and William A. Wright, in Great Books of the Western World (Chicago, 1952), vol. XXVII, p. 49.
76. "The World of Hamlet," Yale Review, XLI (1952), 502-23, reprinted in Shakespeare: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Leonard Dean (New York, 1961), p. 240.
77. Ibid., p. 252.
78. Mack notes how the "radical metaphor" of the play centers upon the problematic nature of "act" and its relationship to reality: "What, this play asks again and again, is an act? What is its relation to the inner act, the intent? . . . For an action may be nothing but pretense. . . . Or it may be a pretense that is actually a mirroring of reality, like the play within the play, of the tragedy of Hamlet" ("The World of Hamlet," p. 247).
79. Ibid., p. 247.
80. "Introduction" to The Tempest, ed. Frank Kermode (New York, 1964), p. 1. All quotations from The Tempest will be taken from this text.
81. The Elizabethan World Picture, p. 35.
82. The Tempest, p. xl.
83. Ibid., pp. xl-xli.

Two: New Scenes on the Cosmic Stage

In the beginning of his study of Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England Richard S. Westfall pointed out an important development in seventeenth-century religious thought:

A new intellectual current, the achievements of natural science, were raising questions that could not be ignored. . . . With the growing prestige of science--it achieved immense prestige after the publication of Newton's Principia--its reconciliation with Christianity came more and more to mean the adjustment of Christian beliefs to conform to the conclusions of science.

1

A vital part of the process by which the Christian concept of man became "revised" into the eighteenth-century doctrine of natural perfectibility involved seventeenth-century "adjustments" of Christian beliefs to science's conclusions about man's place in the world. This chapter will examine the background and implications of seventeenth-century scientific-theological notions of man's role on the cosmic stage to show how such notions represented radically new visions of the Christian drama of salvation.

During the dynamic movement of scientific thought in the seventeenth century a new optimistic spirit was born, permeated with the idea of man's increasing powers to discover and control Nature's operations. A major factor

in the growth of this spirit was the new science's view of Nature as a machine which could be comprehended by the exact reckonings of mechanical laws. The leading seventeenth-century proponent of this mechanical view was Descartes, who, in demonstrating that the operation of the universe could be understood by means of a few general principles of mechanics, laid unprecedented emphasis on the efficient causality of Nature. In his The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science, E. A. Burttt aptly noted how in Descartes' view of reality God was "relegated to the position of first cause of motion" and "the happenings of the universe" seen as eternal "incidents in the regular revolutions of a great mathematical machine."² In stressing the role of secondary causes in the world, Descartes also stressed man's great capabilities in this new mechanical order of reality; thus, in his Discourse on the Method (1637), he explained how man might be able to gain mastery over Nature's processes:

we may find a practical philosophy by means of which, knowing the force and the action of fire, water, air, the stars, heavens and all other bodies that environ us, as distinctly as we know the different crafts of our artisans, we can in the same way employ them in all those uses to which they are adapted, and thus render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature. (italics mine)

3

While the "Bacon-faced" generation of seventeenth-century English science generally rejected Descartes' a priori (from theories to facts) method of scientific

investigation in favor of the experimental method, English scientists welcomed Descartes' view of man's new scientific capabilities, and gradually adopted the mechanical philosophy as the most likely hypothesis for their own experiments. In his Ancients and Moderns R. F. Jones described how seventeenth-century English scientists, imbued with new optimism over man's technological skills, felt

that they were living at a momentous time in history. "An unusual light," says Sprat, "seems to overspread this Age" Whereas Glanvill and Boyle had only seen in visions a future technological paradise, Sprat speaks of the "wonderful perfection" already achieved by the "mechanical Arts."

5

Following Bacon's notion that the purpose of learning was to "endow the condition and life of man with new powers and works," the experimental philosophers pointed to mechanical "inventions and discoveries" as the means through which man could create a new technological paradise--in treatise after treatise the experimental philosopher exulted over the manner in which the present "race of inventors" was altering "the face of all things."⁷ Henry Power's Experimental Philosophy (1664) perhaps most vividly reflects the manner in which seventeenth-century science emphasized man's unlimited ability to gain technological control of the machine-world. After congratulating his contemporary scientists on their efforts to "unriddle all Nature," Power noted:

This is the Age wherein all mens Souls are in a kind of fermentation, and the spirit of Wisdom and Learning begins to mount and free itself . . . to find the various turnings, and mysterious process of the divine Art, in the management of this great Machine of the World.

8

One of the most influential figures in the seventeenth-century English scientific movement was, doubtless, Robert Boyle, the "Christian virtuoso" par excellence, whose writings mirror the most dominant intellectual concerns of the period. A staunch defender of both the Christian faith and the mechanical philosophy, Boyle epitomized the new direction Christian rationalism was to take as a result of the new science's mechanistic, progressivist tendencies.

Boyle's fervent scientific progressivism has been pointed out by Professor Jones, who observes that Boyle "foresaw more clearly than any of his contemporaries the development of machinery . . . and based his claim for science not so much on the stage it had reached in his own day as upon his vision of a mechanical future."⁹ In accepting Descartes' mathematical-mechanical view of Nature as the most likely "hypothesis" for the experimental science,¹⁰ Boyle envisioned the "mathematical principles" of natural philosophy as

truths of a transcendent kind, that do not properly belong either to philosophy or theology; but are universal foundations and instruments of all the knowledge we mortals can acquire.

11

And in stressing the importance of natural philosophy,

Boyle, as Ernest Tuveson has shown, placed God's "Word" in a subordinate position to His "Work":

Boyle, in effect, placed revelation in a secondary position /to natural philosophy/, despite his fear that men should value natural philosophy so highly as to neglect the Word: But neither the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, nor that of the powers and effects of matter and motion, seem to be more than an epicycle (if I may so call it) of the great and universal system of God's contrivances, . . . so that both these doctrines. . . seem to be but members of the universal hypothesis, whose objects I conceive to be the nature, counsels and works of God.

12

In championing both the mechanical philosophy and Christianity, Boyle sought to reconcile that philosophy with the Christian view of the supernaturalistic role of providence and miracles in the universe. In his highly popular and influential Some Considerations touching upon the Usefulness of Experimentall Naturall Philosophy (1663), Boyle visualized the world as a great clock-like machine, operating in a precisely mechanical fashion, according to universal laws originally set into the machine by its Great Engineer, God:

God . . . having resolved, before the Creation, to make such a World as this of Ours, . . . put them /variously figur'd Corpuscles/ into such Motions, that by the assistance of his ordinary preserving Concourse, the Phaenomena, which he intended should appear in the Universe, must as orderly follow . . . as is consistent with the Good of the whole, and the preservation of the Primitive and Catholick Laws established by the Supreme Cause. As in the formerly mention'd Clock of Strasburg, the several Pieces making up that curious Engine, are so fram'd and adapted, and are put into such a motion, that . . . each performs its part in order to the various Ends for which it was contriv'd.

13

That this vision of the mechanical and universal regularity of Nature's laws caused Boyle the Christian some uneasiness can be seen from the fact that later on in this same passage, he argued defensively that these "Corpuscles" moved as "if there were diffus'd through the Universe an intelligent Being, watchful over the public Good, and careful to Administer all things wisely for the good of the particular Parts of it" (italics mine).¹⁴ Boyle's efforts, however, to leave the door open for an active and solicitous providential mind in the governance of the cosmic engine, were, as Westfall notes, completely overshadowed by his insistence on the strict regularity of nature's operations:

The order of nature, the unfailing rule of natural law over brute matter, dominated Boyle's imagination as no miracle could. . . . In effect he /Boyle/ rules out the necessity of divine intervention and defined providence as the maintenance of the universal and benevolent order--that is to say, general providence.

15

This "general providence" formula (in which Providence was equated with Nature's automatic operations), assumed, within the context of a new scientific ethos of man's growing ability to control Nature's operations, great importance in secularizing the Christian view of the world as a divinely directed drama in which man enacted his limited role. As science gradually transferred the functions of an ever-active Providence to Nature's automatic processes, God's new place in the drama as "Chief Engineer"

grew increasingly remote. And, as science increasingly stressed man's progressive powers to control the machine-world, the Christian idea of man's limitations in the drama underwent a drastic alteration into the idea of natural perfectibility through scientific advances. An essential ingredient in this alteration involved a unique alliance between scientific progressivist notions and traditional Platonic notions of the soul's rational power to transcend its bodily limitations on the world-stage. The remainder of this chapter will show how, by intricately fusing the mechanist-progressivist views of scientists like Boyle with the Platonic concepts of Cambridge Platonists like Henry More, the seventeenth-century scientific theologian Thomas Burnet reshaped the drama of human salvation into the doctrine of natural perfectibility.

II

Possibly no seventeenth-century thinker was as fascinated with the idea of the world as God's stage play, or wrote more concerning the nature of the cosmic play of salvation, than the Cambridge Platonist, Henry More; throughout his numerous works he constantly evoked the image of God as a Great Dramatist testing individual souls in the "Tragick Comedy" of human existence. More's use of the world-stage concept, which was largely derived from Plotinus's use of it in the Enneads, was firmly

rooted in the Neo-Platonic view of man as a soul who, having fallen into a body-prison, was in a continual process of disengagement towards his original spiritual state. In his study of The Platonic Renaissance in England, Ernst Cassirer has shown how More sought to combat the predestinarian tenets of Calvinism by adopting the Plotinian view of man's innate freedom to strive¹⁸ towards the divine. Cassirer explains More's fundamental ethical position in speaking of Plotinus's notion of the soul:

Knowledge of the divine and of the intelligible world is possible only for that soul which has achieved within itself the decisive turning towards and away from the sensible to the intelligible. . . . This basic thought of Plotinus's theology . . . occupies the central position in Henry More's Enchiridion ethicum, the principle ethical work of the Cambridge School.

19

Plotinus's theology also occupied a central place in More's poetry. In the second stanza of The Prae-existency of the Soul (1647), More thus called upon Plotinus to aid him in visualizing the soul's preexistent state,

I would sing the Praeexistency
Of humane souls . . .

• • • • •
Aread thou sacred Soul of Plotin deare
Tell what we mortalls are, tell what of old we were,²⁰

and after describing the soul's fall into "corporeall sense" from its original spiritual state, More goes on to imagine myriads of souls awaiting embodiment into the world:

But infinite Myriads undipt as yet
Did still attend each vitall moveing sphear,
And wait their turnes for generation fit. . . .
(11. 100-102)

He then describes how these souls, in entering the world, must purge themselves of their "terrene thoughts," for "The purged souls ascent nought may retard; / But earthly-mindednesse may eath foreslow / Their flight. . . ." (11. 142-4).

In his long philosophical poem, Psychathanasia, or the Second Part of the Song of the Soul (1647), More also followed Plotinus in likening man's present bodily existence to the vain "show" of the theatrical performer in order to suggest the soul's innate liberty to gradually transcend its "terrene thoughts." In Book I, Canto I, of the poem, More began his argument for the soul's immortality by first rejecting materialism, which, he says, becomes so immersed in the sensuous life that it ends up "calling thin shadows true realitie" (I, I, 12). And throughout the second canto of this poem he celebrates the soul's unique powers to see beyond the "shadowy" fancies of the material life; the soul, "when quite heedlesse of this earthie world" (I, II, 42), More argued,

. . . doth herself invest
With rising forms, and reasons all the way;
And by right reason doth herself devest
Of falser fancies. Who can gainsay
But she's self-mov'd, when she doth with self-sway
Thus change herself, as inward life doth feel?
(I, II, 44)

Canto III begins, however, with a different and despondent mood, in which the poet is seen lamenting "fading lifes decayes" (Argument to III), and the vain, brief part he must play on the world stage:

Aye me! said I, within my wearied breast,
And sighed sad, wherefore did God erect
This stage of misery? . . .

Thus vex'd I was 'cause of mortality;
Her curst remembrance cast me in this plight,
That I grew sick of the worlds vanity. . . .
(I, III, 2, 3)

Throughout the first ten stanzas of this third canto, More utters his "deep sorrow and restlesse disdain" over the "idle show" (I, III, 3) of man's sensual existence on the stage of life. In this somber mood he is suddenly visited by a divine Nymph who chides him for vainly questioning the ways of God and Nature, and reminds him that man's true existence lies in the "inward life" of the soul, and not with "the body sensible so garnished / With outward forms" (I, III, 26). "Vain showes may vanish that have gaily shone / To feeble sense" (I, III, 19), the Nymph explains, but ". . . nothing can empair / The inward life or its hid essence wrong" (I, III, 30). Rescued from his despair by the Nymph's teaching, More proceeds to demonstrate how, as a result of "the soul's strange nature, operation," and "loose union" with the "frail body" (II, II, 7), man is free to transcend his "lower," sensual elements and be reborn into a higher spiritual life. Finally, in the last book of the poem, after describing

how man can overcome the "low attractions" of his bodily nature through right reason, More declares:

This proves the soul to sit at liberty,
Not wedg'd into this masse of earth, but free
Unloos'd from any strong necessity
To do the body's dictates, while we see
Clear reason shining in serenity,
Calling above unto us. . . .

(III, II, 40)

More's Plotinian conception of the soul's liberty to gradually free itself from the "idle show" of the sensual life took on more profound dimensions in his apocalyptic notions of the great "plot" of the divine drama. Like many other great theological figures of the seventeenth century, More devoted a large amount of his theological efforts to deciphering prophecies contained in the apocalyptic books. ²¹ Westfall has noted how such seventeenth-century concerns with apocalyptic prophecies were rooted in a new spirit of confidence:

A new and growing confidence also pervaded English thought--confidence in human capabilities and confidence in the possibilities of life. . . . A new spirit informed interpretations of the biblical prophecies. Where earlier the prophecies were thought to predict the coming of Antichrist and the end of the world, they were now seen to point towards a future millennium when a new and better life would arise from expanding knowledge.

²²

More fervently shared this new optimistic reading of the prophecies, and its notion that a better life would occur in a future 1,000 year millennial reign on earth as the result of man's expanding knowledge. Throughout his biblical interpretations in An Explanation of the Grand

Mystery of Godliness (1660), he formulated an apocalyptic optimism in terms of the world-stage concept, by portraying God as a Dramatist presiding over a cosmic play of salvation in which man, the actor, is seen engaged in a struggle to overcome his "Animal Life." A central thesis in An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness was that man's fallen condition, which More viewed as a wilful immersion in a lower "Animal Life," was not to last throughout the entire drama of human salvation. To More, man's temporary lapse into this animal life was wisely allowed by the Divine Dramatist,

This Lapse of Men and Angels is their forsaking of the Divine Life, and wholly cleaving to the Animal. . . . And it is but a piece of Wisdom and Justice in that Great Judge and Dramatist God Almighty, to permit this to be for a season,

23

for out of man's struggle with the flesh would arise a greater triumph of the Divine life:

Now that Wisdom, as I have said, that orders all things sweetly, is not in the least baffled by this Misadventure of the fall of Angels and Men, but looks upon it as fit Fuel for a more glorious Triumph of the Divine Life.

24

And thus the divine drama of life is destined to have a joyful ending:

The Kingdom of Darkness, no question by Him that rules over all is dexterously subordinated to the greater advantage of the Kingdom of Light, it yielding a due exercise of all their Faculties in the behalf of the Divine Life. . . . So that the Period of Ages ought to end (so exact a Providence attending things) as a very joyful and pleasant Tragick Comedy.

This triumph of the Divine Life within man in the last "Period of Ages" would justify Providence, and bring a fitting climax to the drama:

And it is no wonder that the Stupid world be much amazed at Providence, till that great Dramatist, God Almighty, draw on the Period towards the last Catastrophe, and the Earth will ring with this Plaudite or Acclamation.

26

The "Period" before "the last Catastrophe," More argued, would coincide with the final destruction of Anti-Christ, and bring about a "most happy Scene of affairs"; that²⁷ destruction, as More allegorically interpreted it, involved the gradual perfecting of men into the condition of Saints:

I am sufficiently satisfied in myself, that this Destruction is not to be understood necessarily of any carnal warfare . . . and that the reign of the Saints will not be by the invasion of the rights of Princes . . . but by the conversion of Prince and people every where into the condition of Saints.

28

More's version of the divine drama thus involved a fundamental alteration in the traditional Christian idea of man playing his role on a probationary stage by knowing himself both as the son of Adam and heir of Heaven. As a result of his concept of man's freedom to transcend his animal life, More "redesigned" the probationary stage to include new earthly scenes in which man was seen divinely destined to progressively overcome his fallen state.

While More tailored the divine plot of the cosmic drama to the religious framework of Christian Platonism, the task remained of reconciling that framework to the

dominant seventeenth-century mechanical view of the operation of the drama. More's spiritualist idea of space as a real entity, and his Platonic notion of a world-soul out of which all being emanated, point to his rejection of the dominant scientific tendency to place the corporeal world on a mechanical basis.²⁹ In his idea of a "plastic soul" which acted as the "vice-regent" of God in the universe, More, indeed, strove to respiritualize the Cartesian mathematical universe; and his concept of a "plastic soul" was, in fact, precisely that spiritualistic view of Nature which Boyle and other proponents of Cartesian mechanism rejected as a "vulgarly received notion."³⁰ One of the most ardent of those Cartesian proponents was Thomas Burnet, who as a student and associate of More's sought to fuse the religious-progressivist structure of More's thought with the mechanistic, progressivist tenets of seventeenth-century science.

III

Recent studies have shown the influential place which Thomas Burnet's geological-theological works held in the scientific and theological issues of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.³¹ In her Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory Miss Nicolson indicates the extent of the controversy which Burnet's Sacred Theory of the Earth³² (1681-90) produced:

Today we consider the Principia the most influential volume of the late seventeenth century. Six years earlier, however, another book appeared, publication of which precipitated the first major battle between science and religion. Much more than the Principia, which was widely acclaimed, Burnet's Telluris Theoria Sacra provoked reply, defense and attack. . . . In England the list of those who expressed themselves on Burnet's theories is an imposing one, including in the period from 1685 to 1715 the names of nearly all men now remembered in the history of science and theology as well as those of many who have been forgotten.

33

In his Sacred Theory Burnet presented a graphic and detailed account of the history of the earth in which he attempted to show how the mechanical philosophy's growing discoveries about the physical universe were in complete harmony with Scriptural accounts of such major Biblical events as the Creation, Deluge and the Conflagration.

In a kind of travelogue of sacred history, Burnet took the reader from Chaos to Chaos, unfolding four major "stage settings" in God's "great drama of the world," as he called it: ³⁴ the original "Creation" of an egg-shaped earth, the "Deluge" producing the present "ruined" earth, the "Conflagration" with its recreation of the original earth, and the final "New World" of the Millennial Kingdom. Convinced that man's present abode was not the world God had originally created, but was rather a "Great Ruine," a "broken and confus'd heap of bodies, plac'd in no order to one another," Burnet concluded that these global irregularities could have only resulted from the cataclysmic action of the Flood. The antedeluvian earth had been,

in Burnet's view, "smooth, regular and uniform," a vast egg-shaped globe in which man had enjoyed a paradisaical state. At the time of the Flood, the exterior frame of the "egg" cracked, and large parts of the earth's surface fell down, breaking open a "great Abyesse" or subterranean waters. In the course of time, this "ruined" earth would be destroyed by such natural causes as volcanic fires and earthquakes, and would dissolve into the same chaotic state that existed at the beginning of the Creation. The earth would then arise in its original form to be the setting of a "New World"--the thousand-year millennial kingdom on earth. A striking and essential feature of Burnet's "Christian geology" was the fact that his scientific explanations were based on the Cartesian mechanical view of the cosmos as emerging from natural principles inherent in itself.³⁵ The Creation, Deluge and Conflagration could be thus seen, in this view of sacred history, as the results of the inescapable effects of physical and mechanical laws.³⁶

Burnet's naturalistic treatment of sacred history was carried on by subsequent "world-making scientific millennialists,"³⁷ as Tuveson has rightly termed them, such as John Woodward and William Whiston. In his An Essay toward a Natural History of the Earth (1695),³⁸ Woodward assumed, like Burnet, that the interior of the earth was a "great Abyss" filled with water, and that at the time of the Flood, the contents of the Abyss boiled over and

covered the globe. Woodward then showed how the upper crust of the earth would dissolve in a precisely mechanical fashion into different strata according to their specific gravities. William Whiston, one of Burnet's most ardent followers, made Burnet's naturalistic accounts more scientifically probable by an ingenious explanation, through Newtonian principles, of cometary action on the planetary system. In A New Theory of the Earth (1696)³⁹ Whiston argued that a passing comet had created huge atmospheric disturbances which, in turn, disrupted the earth's surface and broke open the "great Abyss." In time, the same comet, traveling along its predetermined celestial course, would automatically collide with the earth and bring about the Conflagration, and the subsequent millennial kingdom on earth.

The idea of the world as a stage on which men play⁴⁰ their parts was a central thematic image in Burnet's Sacred Theory of the Earth as well as his other major works: Archaeologiae Philosophicae (1692), De Statu Mortuorum⁴¹ (1720), and De Fide et Officium Christianorum (1728). As in Plotinus's and Henry More's sacred play, Burnet's drama furthermore centered upon the soul's freedom to transcend its bodily limitations and continually progress towards its former spiritual life. In a "Preface" to the Sacred Theory Burnet wrote thus of the soul's present bodily "imprisonment":

Reason and Morality would indeed suggest to us, that an innocent Soul, fresh and pure from the hands of its Maker, could not be immediately cast into Prison. . . . I call this Body a Prison because it is a confinement and restraint upon our best Faculties and Capacities;

42

and in presenting his view of the "Tragick-Comedy" of
43
life, Burnet enthusiastically followed More's notion that the essential plot in God's drama involved the soul's progressive spiritual transcendence of this bodily prison.

In his Theory Burnet noted that there was a "Plot or Mystery," and certain "Grand Issues and Events," running through the Providential scheme of creation by which

All the Changes of our World are fixt, How, or how often to be destroy'd, and how renew'd; What different faces of Nature, and what of Mankind, in every part of its Course; what new scenes to adorn the Stage and what new parts to be acted.

44

And, like More, Burnet envisioned this cosmic drama ending in joyous earthly scenes in which men were to act out

45

new parts of spiritual perfection. Believing that Providence provided "certain Periods" and "Fulnesses of
46
Time" for "some great Instauration," he argued that in

the period before the Conflagration man would enjoy a scene of general righteousness. In that period God would enlarge men's "Spirits by greater discoveries" in order to create Witnesses to the divine Truth; these Witnesses, he noted,

. . . are to have their Resurrection and Ascension: that is, be advanc'd to power and Authority. And this Resurrection of the Witnesses and depression of Antichrist, is that which will mark the great turn of the World to righteousness, and the great Crisis whereby we may judge of its drawing to an end.

47

Burnet also believed that after the Conflagration, there would be a final earthly "setting" in which man's spiritual climb would continue in a thousand-year utopian state.

In this state, the resurrected saints, fitted with more "glorified bodies," would have greater dominion over the 48 body and thus enjoy a quasi-spiritual existence on earth; and this "New World" of the millennial kingdom would be thus the last act in the great drama of human existence:

And this being the last Act and close of all humane affairs, it ought to be the more exquisite and elaborate: that it may crown the work, satisfie the Spectators, and end in a general applause. The Whole Theatre resounding with the praises of the great Dramatist, and the wonderful Art and Order of the composition.

49

While Burnet thus followed More's view of man's perfection in new earthly scenes on the world stage, he also radically transformed the idea of this divinely destined spiritual progress by equating that progress with advance in scientific knowledge.

The mechanistic and progressivist spirit of the seventeenth-century scientific movement totally informed Burnet's approach to the geological and theological problems which his theories raised. In his "Swift and

the World-Makers," Tuveson aptly describes Burnet's mechanical conception of the divine drama:

The drama of human history goes on against the background of scenes produced by the great "Wheels and Weights" of the mechanical universe; and the divine Dramatist is also the Stage Manager who, however, unlike merely human ones, need not constantly oversee his creations; once having made the wheels and weights in certain forms and given them appropriate motion, He may be sure that they will of themselves produce the desired effects at the exactly correct moment.

50

In visualizing the drama as automatically unfolding its "scenes" according to a predetermined mechanism originally set into it by its great "Engineer," Burnet, like Boyle and Descartes before him, significantly transferred the functions of an ever-active Providence to the automatic processes of Nature. And like Boyle, too, Burnet also placed great emphasis on man's increasing scientific powers to control Nature's mechanical operations.

Thus, in the beginning chapters of his Theory, Burnet speaks at great length about the vast progress which recent "useful inventions and discoveries" have brought about. The practical arts, he argues, have only recently been perfected,

And 'tis in most other practical Arts as in Navigation, we generally know their Original and History: who the Inventors and by what degrees improv'd, and how few of them brought to any perfection till of late Ages. All the Artificial and Mechanical World is, in a manner, new.

51

And, in the following passages, he also calls attention to the present stock of geniuses, and their success in

bringing knowledge to its present heights:

How Little hath been discover'd till of late,
either of our own Bodies, or of the body of the
Earth, and of the functions or motions of nature
in either? . . . These are either yet unknown,
or were so at least till this last Age; which
seems to me to have made a greater progress than
all Ages before put together, since the beginning
of the World. . . . And the whole mass of
knowledge in this Earth doth not seem to be so
great, but that a few Ages more, with two or
three happy Genius's in them, may bring to light
all that we are capable to understand in this
state of mortality. (*italics mine*)

52

This scientific ethos of aspiration in Burnet was
to take on large significance in his treatment of the Mosaic
account of the Creation in the Archaeologiae Philosophicae.
In his Theory, Burnet had set forth the idea of a provi-
dential course of knowledge thus:

'Tis reasonable to suppose, that there is a
Providence in the conduct of Knowledge, as well
as of other affairs on the Earth; and that it was
not design'd that all the mysteries of Nature and
Providence should be plainly and clearly understood
throughout all the Ages of the World; but that
there is an Order establish'd for this, as other
things, and certain Periods and Seasons; And what
was made known to the Ancients only by broken
Conclusions and Traditions, will be known (in the
latter Ages of the World) in a more perfect way,
by Principles and Theories. The increase of
Knowledge being that which changeth so much the
face of the World. . . .

53

In his Archaeologiae Burnet applied this idea to the
Genesis account of the creation of the world in a radical
fashion, arguing that the Genesis account was not a
"philosophical" one, but a "vulgar" and "popular" one,
fit for "Makers of Bricks whose Breath . . . smelt of the

Leeks and Onions of Egypt." ⁵⁴ And, in relating how Moses, throughout the first chapter of Genesis, had "departed from the Physical Truth in the Account of Creation," ⁵⁵ Burnet argued that like other "Heathen Philosophers," Moses deliberately used this "popular" method of teaching to keep his contemporaries from the true physical facts of the creation:

Nor was this Method /i.e., "popular" one/ only used by the Penmen of the Sacred Scriptures, but it was Customary for the Heathen Philosophers to instruct their Young Scholars in a gross and popular Manner, nor did they admit them to the interior sense of Things /i.e., true scientific explanation/.

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In explaining why Moses had employed this popular method of teaching, Burnet further contended that it was more "Servicable to Religion and least burdensome to the Understanding of the People" ⁵⁷ for Moses to depart from the philosophical and scientific truth about the Creation, for

God makes use of diverse Ways in the Government of the World; and according to the Nature of the Times and Peoples, so he changes his Methods, that thereby he may more effectively promote the Salvation of all.

58

Since Divine Providence had provided for the progressive intellectual unfolding of the secrets of Nature, and since men have recently gained "a more perfect knowledge in the demonstrative Science," these secrets, Burnet wrote, are now to be "considered and understood according to the Truth of the Understanding. . . ." ⁵⁹ Furthermore, since it is the "increase of knowledge which has so changed the face of the World,"

All Things are to be renewed by the Principles of Nature and clear Reason, and amended and established by Solid Theories; so that, when the End of all things approaches, Truth, being revived, may shine with double Lustre, as the Prelude of a future Renovation.

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Burnet's idea of the process of God's dispensation thus led him to view Revelation as a part of man's progress, but a part which, in the course of time, was to be reinterpreted, and if necessary, superceded by the demands of the "Solid Theories" of scientific truth. And, in this view of progress, religion, as Tuveson has shown, was seen merely as one step in man's advance towards perfection, and the Church more as a product of history than a repository of saving truths.

The interpretation which Burnet also gave in the Archaeologiae to the Genesis account of man's Fall graphically shows how Revelation was being tested and adjusted to the light of "clear Reason." In examining the story of the Fall, Burnet denied the traditional moral interpretation of the Fall, for it seemed unreasonable to him to believe that

A Work /the created world/ that was six days ere it could be elaborated and brought to Perfection, and that by an Omnipotent Architect, /could/ be thus in a few hours ruined by so vile a beast;

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furthermore, the notion of man's Fall and his punishment seemed to Burnet a

very cruel and very hard thing in this Respect that God should be said to have tormented, nay

and ruined Mankind for so small a Fault, and that too committed through the Levity of a Woman's Mind.

64

What, then did the light of Reason have to say of the Fall, and its meaning in the destiny of man? Burnet argued that Moses' account of the Fall was a fable, suitable to primitive minds, and that man's moral degeneration consisted of a long series of historical epochs in which man fell away from the good, not through some primordial sin which was transmitted to all men, but through increase of bad teaching and bad philosophy.

In Book II of his Theory Burnet had stressed the value of a "Moral or Philosophical History" of the world:

A Moral or Philosophick History of the World well writ, would certainly be a very useful work, to observe and relate how the Scenes of Humane life have chang'd in several Ages, the modes and Forms of living, in what simplicity Men begun at first, and by what degrees they came out of that way, by luxury, ambition, improvement, or changes in Nature; then what new forms and modifications were superadded by the invention of Arts, what by Religion, what by Superstition.

65

And, in the Archaeologiae, as Tuveson has demonstrated, Burnet supplied a far-reaching account of man's moral and philosophical progress. What Burnet proposed, as Tuveson shows, was a new vision of the redemption of mankind through successive stages of intellectual growth which were equated with spiritual growth. The thesis underlying Burnet's vision was ingenious--the history of human thought is composed of two simultaneous actions: the first consists

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in the decay of the true (i.e., philosophical) views of the creation of the world and man's progress in it as a result of bad teaching and bad philosophy; the second consists of man's destined moral and philosophical advance as the result of his increasing understanding of Nature through reason and science. In Burnet's view of this advance, God's method of redemption lay in a process of continuous intellectual improvement of the race in three defined stages: "Barbarity," "Superstition" and "true Religion";⁶⁷ and by "true Religion," Burnet meant, as we have seen, that which was founded upon the "Principles of Nature and clear Reason." Tuveson notes the basic ingredients in Burnet's new "theodicy":

Thus it is, that, although the traditional learning degenerated among the Greeks, the experimental and theoretical knowledge increased. And it is this experimental learning which forms the true path of progress whereby man is recovering from his degenerate state. . . . Burnet, then, was writing a new Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. The keynote of salvation is the unfolding of the human mind; it is accomplished to a large extent not by divine intervention or operation of supernatural grace but by the law of nature.

68

Burnet's view of man's role on the cosmic stage assumed profound dimensions in his interpretation of man's recovery from the Fall as primarily an intellectual-scientific development through the process of natural law. For, in Burnet, the Platonic vision of man's spiritual liberty to progress into a higher life became transformed into the idea of man's natural transcendence of a

"primitive" animal-like state through increasing rational growth. The "scene" of general righteousness which Burnet had envisioned as occurring in the "latter Ages of the World" through the enlargement of men's "Spirits by greater Discoveries" was the result, then, of man's increased scientific discoveries and knowledge; and the "new scenes" which were to adorn the divine stage as a "prelude to a future renovation" were also ones in which man was destined to progress towards perfection as "all things became renewed by the Principles of Nature and clear Reason." The final "act" of the thousand-year millennial state could be thus seen as a vital step in man's progressive intellectual development on earth.

In the Theory, Burnet depicted the millennial state as a new "paradise restored" in which a community of philosophers-saints enjoyed an earthly utopia:

the great Natural Character of it /The millennium/, is this in general, That it will be Paradisaical. Free from all inconveniences, either of external Nature, or of our own Bodies. . . . There will be nothing but Truth, Candor, Serenity and Ingenuity: as in a Society or Commonwealth of Saints and Philosophers. In a word, 'twill be Paradise restor'd.

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What was of great importance in Burnet's concept of this state is the primary part played by knowledge of a non-religious kind. The millennial state was, as Tuveson puts it, a kind of "Heavenly City of Virtuosi" in which the philosophers-saints would continue to expand and perfect their scientific knowledge and discoveries.

Burnet noted how in the earthly utopia,

The doctrine of the Heavens, fix'd Stars,
Planets and Comets, both as to their matter,
motion and form, will be thus clearly demon-
strated: and what are mysteries to us now,
will become matter of ordinary conversation.
We shall be better acquainted with our neigh-
boring Worlds, and make new discoveries as to
the fate of their affairs;

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and in this millennial state, "inventions in Mathematicks,
or Mechanicks, or Natural Philosophy" would also be carried
on and brought to full perfection.⁷¹ Finally, in this last
"scene" of earthly bliss, men were destined, indeed, to
so progress towards a full rational understanding of the
universe they would ultimately have the "Scheme of all
humane affairs lying before them."⁷²

Burnet's notion of increasing scientific knowledge
as the path upon which man was inevitably progressing
towards a future utopian state played an instrumental part
in later eighteenth-century millennial thinking. Such
scientific theologians as John Edwards and William
Worthington modified Burnet's notion of the catastrophic
inauguration of the earthly millennial state, arguing
that the utopia would simply be a better state of present
society through the progressive moral and intellectual
perfecting of mankind.⁷³ In his study of "Anglican
Apologetics and the Idea of Progress," Professor Ronald S.
Crane has shown how these millennialists stressed the
rapid increase of scientific knowledge and growth of
mechanical inventions as proof that the original curse

laid on nature and man was gradually being erased in preparation for a new utopian state before the end of the world.⁷⁴ To support his contention that God had planned a progressive religious and spiritual renovation in man, John Edwards, for example, pointed to the many "ingenious Inventions" which "hath been improved in these latter . Ages of the World" as evidence that Divine Learning (which is the choicest of all kinds of Knowledge) will be yet further advanced."⁷⁵ And like Burnet, too, Edwards bracketed man's spiritual advance in divine learning with advance in scientific knowledge:

In Natural and Mechanick Philosophy, and all sorts of Mathematicks who sees not the vast Improvements that these latter times have bles'd us with? . . . Shall Divinity, which is the great Art of Arts, remain unimproved?

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In his An Essay on the scheme and conduct, procedure and extent of man's redemption (1743), William Worthington also stressed how the "Curse on the Ground" was being altered by

the Improvements likewise, which in these latter Ages especially, have been made in Mechanicks . . . and by the happy Investigation of the Laws of Motion and a dextrous application of the Mechanical Powers.

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Such improvement, Worthington further argued, demonstrated that God has planned that mankind shall "at length arrive at such a Pitch of Proficiency under the Gospel Dispensation, that there will be no Remains of Sin or Evil of any Kind."⁷⁸

In their rhapsodic vision of a new and glorious future for mankind in a new earthly utopia, millennialists like Edwards and Worthington thus closely followed Burnet in equating man's moral and spiritual progress with man's natural advance in scientific and philosophical knowledge. And in these concepts lay the seeds of such later and important eighteenth-century views of human perfectibility as Joseph Priestley's notion of man's predestined scientific advance towards natural perfectibility in a future historical age. In his Essay on the First Principles of Government Priestley noted how, in the "natural course of human affairs,"

. . . all knowledge will be subdivided and extended; and knowledge, as Lord Bacon observes, being power, the human powers will, in fact, be enlarged; nature, including both its materials, and its laws, will be more at our command; men . . . will grow daily more happy, each in himself, and more able (and, I believe, more disposed) to communicate happiness to others. Thus, whatever was the beginning of this world, the end will be glorious and paradisaical. . . .

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During the eighteenth century Burnet's new, "up-to-date" drama of human salvation encountered great opposition from contemporary Christian humanists, who in their own writings proceeded to exploit the world-stage concept to retain and express traditional Christian views of man's limited role in the divine drama.

Notes

1. Richard S. Westfall, Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England (New Haven, Conn., 1958), pp. 2-3.
2. Edwin Arthur Burtt, The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science (New York, 1932), p. 113.
3. Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason and Seeking for Truth in the Sciences, Part VI, in Rules for The Direction of the Mind, Discourse on the Method, Meditations on First Philosophy, Objections Against the Meditations and Replies, and The Geometry, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, in Great Books of the Western World (Chicago, 1952), vol. XXXI, p. 61.
4. Cf. Richard Foster Jones, Ancients and Moderns: A Study of the Rise of the Scientific Movement in Seventeenth-Century England, 2nd ed. (St. Louis, 1961), pp. 185-6.
5. Ibid., p. xii.
6. Works of Francis Bacon, ed. James Spedding, R. L. Ellis, D. D. Heath (London, 1879-1890), vol. III, p. 498, quoted by Jones, p. 59. This zealous scientific desire to bend nature to the purpose of man was vividly reflected in Thomas Sprat's The History of the Royal Society of London, For the Improving of Natural Knowledge, 3rd ed. (London, 1722): "The Beautiful Bosom of Nature will be expos'd to our view: We shall enter into its Garden, and tast of its Fruits, and satisfy our selves with its plenty" (p. 327).
7. Cf. Joseph Glanvill, The Vanity of Dogmatizing (London, 1661), reproduced by The Facsimile Text Society (New York, 1931), p. 182. Beginning with George Hakewill's An Apologie of the Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World (Oxford, 1627), the superiority of the moderns is attested to by man's growing technological powers. In his Ancients and Moderns, Jones shows how the last chapter of Hakewill's An Apologie is full of

a new emphasis upon the new science's discoveries and its "many singular artificial inventions, for the use, ease, delight or ornament of mankind" (p. 34). John Jonston took up this theme in his A History of the Constancy of Nature (London, 1657), with an even greater emphasis upon "modern discoveries, inventions and science in general" (Jones, p. 37). Finally Glanvill's The Vanity of Dogmatizing contains a truly euphoic summary of the new philosophy's achievements: "Methinks this Age seems resolved to bequeath posterity somewhat to remember it: And the glorious Undertakers /i.e., virtuosi/, wherewith Heaven hath blest our Days, will leave the world better provided then /sic/ they found it. And whereas in former times such generous free-spirited Worthies were, as the Rare newly observed Stars, a single one the wonder of an Age: In ours they are like the lights of the greater size that twinkle in the Starry Firmament: And this last Century can glory in numerous constellations" (p.181).

8. Experimental Philosophy, In Three Books: Containing New Experiments Microscopical, Mercurial, Magnetical. With some Deductions, and Probable Hypotheses, raised from them, in Avouchment and Illustration of the now famous Atomical Hypothesis (London, 1664), pp. 122, 183.
9. Ancients and Moderns, pp. 265-6.
10. Cf. Ancients and Moderns, p. 166, and Burttt, The Metaphysical Foundations, pp. 172ff.
11. The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle, ed. Thomas Birch (London, 1672), vol. VI, p. 711. In The Metaphysical Foundations, Burttt points out how to Boyle "mathematical principles, like the axioms of logic, must be ultimate truths superior to God himself, and independent of revelation" (p. 173).
12. Millennium and Utopia (New York, 1964), p. 107. Tuve-son cites Boyle's Works, vol. VI, pp. 758-9.
13. (Oxford, 1663), pp. 70-2.
14. Ibid.
15. Science and Religion, pp. 85-6. In The Metaphysical Foundations, Burttt also points out that Boyle's "main argument for God and providence is the exquisite structure and symmetry of the world--regularity, not irregularity. . . ." (p. 201).

16. Cf. Burtt, The Metaphysical Foundations, pp. 292-8, for a summary of the way in which the "general providence formula" led to the rise of eighteenth-century philosophers' views that God was no longer a necessary "working hypothesis" for the cosmic engine's operations, since natural law would suffice.
17. Cf. Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, p. 138; Tuveson, Millennium and Utopia, pp. 97-8.
18. Cf. Ernst Cassirer, The Platonic Renaissance in England, trans. James P. Pettegrove (Austin, Texas, 1953), pp. 65ff.
19. Ibid., pp. 27-8. In her Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, Miss Nicolson comments upon More's view of the soul's impulse to be released from its finite limitations: "More's/ Infinity of Worlds was a song of praise to an infinite universe, created by an Infinite God, His Nature such that He could never be satisfied with less than all. In contemplating Space as in contemplating God, the soul of man was elated; released from finite limitations, it stretched its wings and took off into a vast universe of which there was no end, to seek the inexhaustible Good. . . ." (p. 136).
20. The Praeexistency of the Soul, Stanza 2, ll. 1-2, 8-9, in The Complete Poems of Dr. Henry More, 1614-1687, ed. Rev. Alexander B. Grosart (Edinburgh, 1878), p. 119. All quotations from More's poetry will be taken from this edition. In his "Introduction" to the Philosophical Poems of Henry More comprising Psychozōia and Minor Poems (Manchester, England, 1931), Geoffrey Bullough notes how Plotinus was a dominant shaping force in More's poetical thought: "The influence of Plotinus on More's mind was greater than that of any other single writer. . . . and/ The Enneads strengthened his aspiration towards a life of purity and inner harmony. . . . Above all, Plotinus gave him an orderly cosmos, the contemplation of which kindled him for a short time with poetry filled with wonder at a picturesque, vitalistic universe" (pp. xxvii-xxviii).
21. Cf. Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, pp. 126-130.
22. Westfall, Science and Religion, pp. 8-9.
23. An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness, Book VI, Chapter 11, parts 2-3, in Theological Works of Henry More (London, 1708), p. 167.

24. Ibid., Book VI, Chapter 11, part 1, p. 167.
25. Ibid., Book VI, Chapter 11, part 7, p. 167.
26. Ibid., Book VI, Chapter 11, part 8, p. 167.
27. Ibid., "Preface," p. xiv.
28. Defense of the Moral Cabbala, in Collection of Several Philosophical Writings, 4th ed. (London, 1712), p. iii.
29. For More's reactions against Descartes' mechanism, cf. Ernst Cassirer, The Platonic Renaissance, pp. 143-4.
30. Cf. Westfall, Science and Religion, p. 84. Boyle's rejection of the "plastic soul" notion occurs in a long passage in a work entitled A Free Inquiry into the Vulgarly Received Notion of Nature, in The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle, Vol. V, p. 162.
31. Cf. especially Ernest Tuveson, Millennium and Utopia, and Majorie Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory. In his The Age of the World: Moses to Darwin (Baltimore, 1959), Francis C. Haber comments upon the popularity of Burnet's Theory: "One of the most popular of these attempts to explain Mosaic history rationally was Thomas Burnet's Sacred Theory of the Earth, first published in Latin in 1681, expanded in English in 1684, and often printed in England and abroad down to the early nineteenth century. Its author, an erudite English divine, had a robust style, a vivid imagination, and an ingenious theory. As long as the Western world remained Biblically oriented, it was a minor classic, known far and wide" (p. 71).
32. The Sacred Theory of the Earth, Containing an Account of the Original of the Earth, and of All the General Changes Which it Hath already Undergone, or is to Undergo, Till the Consummation of all Things. All quotations from Burnet's Theory will be taken from the 3rd edition (London, 1697).
33. Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, pp. 187, 235.
34. Throughout the Theory, Burnet described the world in terms of a divine stage, and pictured each major event in its "divine plot" as a kind of "stage creation." For example, in Book I he describes how the opening of the "Abysses" of the "Deepe" at the

time of the Deluge and Conflagration would bring "another face of things, other Scenes and a New World upon the stage" (pp. 61-2).

35. For general discussions of Burnet's debt to Descartes see Haber, The Age of the World, pp. 76, 82; and Katharine Brownell Collier, Cosmogonies of our Fathers: Some Theories of the Seventeenth and the Eighteenth Centuries (New York, 1934), p. 69.
36. In The Age of the World Haber notes how Burnet's "approach to Providence left Nature quite free of supernaturalism. . . ." p. 81; and in his The Eighteenth-Century Background: Studies on the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period (Boston, 1961), Basil Willey comments that in Burnet's Theory the world was seen ruined by "the operation of natural causes which, one might suppose, would have produced their result even if man had retained his first innocence" (pp. 32-3).
37. The term "world-maker" or "system-maker" was widely applied to Burnet, Woodward and Whiston by contemporaries. Cf. Ernest Tuveson, "Swift and the World-Makers," JHI, XI (1950), 69. In his Millennium and Utopia Tuveson uses the term "scientific millennialist" to denote the way in which Burnet, Woodward and Whiston combined scientific theories with apocalyptic views of a thousand-year millennial state on earth.
38. An Essay toward a Natural History of the Earth: and Terrestrial Bodies, Especially Minerals: As also of the Sea, Rivers and Springs. With an Account of the Universal Deluge: And of the Effects that it had upon the Earth (London, 1695).
39. A New Theory of the Earth, From its Original, to the Consummation of all Things. Wherein the Creation of the World in Six Days, The Universal Deluge, and the General Conflagration, As laid down in the Holy Scriptures, Are shewn to be perfectly agreeable to Reason and Philosophy. With a large Introductory Discourse concerning the Genuine Nature, Stile, and Extent of the Mosaic History of the Creation, 6th ed. (London, 1755).
40. Whiston and Woodward also used theatrical imagery, but much less significantly and profusely than Burnet. For a typical example, see Whiston's "Introduction" to A New Theory, 6th ed., where he describes how in the coming millennium "a better Scene of Nature

(a new Heaven and a new Earth) is to be introduced, for such better and more noble Creatures" (p. 57).

41. Burnet's Archaeologiae Philosophicae, published in Latin in 1692, was translated by Thomas Foxton as Archaeologiae Philosophicae: or the Ancient Doctrine Concerning the Originals of Things (London, 1729). Chapters 7 and 8 of the original Latin text appeared, however, in translation in Charles Blount's The Oracles of Reason (London, 1693), pp. 20-76. De Statu Mortuorum, published in Latin in 1720, was translated by Mathias Earberry as Of the State of the Dead and of those who are to rise (London, 1728), 2 vols. De Fide et Officium Christianorum appeared in translation by John Dennis as The Faith and Duties of Christians (London, 1728). For a typical use of the world-stage concept in these works see Archaeologiae Philosophicae, in which Burnet notes of the new "scene" of the millennium: "the Reader may fancy (if he pleases) Parts and Scenes /In the millennium/ directly opposite /to those of a ruined world/" (p. 29).
42. Theory, "Preface" to Book IV, p. 86.
43. As with More, the term "Tragick-Comedy" was a favorite one with Burnet for describing the divine drama. Thus in Book II, Chapter VI of his Theory, Burnet noted how the affairs of nations and kings were but "the little under-plots in the Tragick-Comedy of the World" (p. 169).
44. Ibid., Book II, p. 221.
45. Cf. Theory, Book III, where Burnet visualizes the millennial state: "It would be a kind of Immortality to enjoy that prospect /millennium/ before-hand: To see . . . where we shall act next, and what parts. What Saints and Hero's, if I may so say, will appear upon that Stage; and with what luster and excellency" (p. 3).
46. Ibid., Book II, p. 221.
47. Ibid., Book III, pp. 26, 28.
48. Cf. Ibid., Book IV, pp. 139ff., where Burnet described the inhabitants of the millennial state as "purified Spirits."
49. Ibid., p. 145.
50. "Swift and the World-Makers," pp. 57-8.

51. Theory, Book I, p. 27.
52. Ibid., p. 29.
53. Ibid., Book II, p. 195.
54. Archaeologiae Philosophicae, p. 55.
55. Ibid., p. 51.
56. Ibid., p. 52.
57. Ibid., p. 58.
58. Ibid., p. 80.
59. Ibid., p. 74. The "adjustment" of Christian beliefs to science's conclusions during the seventeenth century reaches perhaps its acme of development in Burnet's notion that "Philosophy is the Interpreter of Scripture in natural Things. But I do not here mean a dry and jejune Philosophy, the Figment of an Idle Brain, but that which is agreeable to the Apprehensions of Nature . . . and Solid Reason" (Archaeologiae, p. 58).
60. Ibid., p. 246.
61. In The Eighteenth-Century Background Willey notes that, in Burnet, "Moses must be interpreted so as not to be 'repugnant to clear and uncontested science'" (p. 34).
62. Cf. Tuveson, Millennium and Utopia, p. 179.
63. Archaeologiae, p. 25.
64. Ibid. The manner in which Burnet completely dismissed older allegorical interpretations of the Fall can be seen in his following remarks on the offense of eating the "Apple": "Who would not fear to violate the most petty, inconsiderable Precept that comes in the Name of God, if the eating of one Forbidden Apple could bring perdition to all Mankind" (p. 25) (*italics mine*).
65. Theory, Book II, p. 168.
66. Cf. Tuveson, Millennium and Utopia, pp. 153ff.
67. Ibid., p. 170.
68. Ibid., pp. 164, 181.

69. Theory, Book IV, pp. 125, 146.
70. Ibid., Book IV, p. 142.
71. Cf. Theory, Book IV, p. 145.
72. Ibid.
73. Cf. Tuveson, Millennium and Utopia, pp. 131-52.
74. "Anglican Apologetics and the Idea of Progress, 1699-1745," MP, XXXI (1933-4), 273-306, 349-382.
75. A Complete history or Survey of all the Dispensations and Methods of Religion, from the beginning of the World to the Consummation of all things (London, 1699), vol. II, pp. 621-22. Throughout this chapter in A Complete History Edwards echoes the catalogue of inventions which Burnet listed in the beginning chapters of his Theory.
76. A Complete history, pp. 631, 634.
77. An Essay on the scheme and conduct, procedure and extent of man's redemption, wherein is shewn from the Holy Scriptures, that this great work is to be accomplished gradually (London, 1743), pp. 93-4.
78. Ibid., p. 2. In his Essay Worthington also echoed Burnet's use of the world-stage concept in arguing that God's great drama "must end with universal applause" (p. 226).
79. An Essay on the First Principles of Government, and on the Nature of Political, Civil and Religious Liberty, 2nd ed. (London, 1771), pp. 4-5.

Three: The Brave "New World" of Pope's Dunciad

In his Lewis Theobald (1919), R. F. Jones suggested that the Phalaris controversy, the Scriblerian project against false learning, and Pope's Dunciad formed a single chain of related events. The three events, Jones felt, were "only notable battles in a continual war" waged by the moderns and ancients over "scholarship and scientific investigation."¹ Ernest Tuveson has recently demonstrated that Temple's and Swift's works in the Phalaris controversy were closely related to such later Scriblerian works as the Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus in attacking the "world-making" scientific millennialists, Thomas Burnet, William Whiston and John Woodward.² The crucial position the "world-makers" occupied in the seventeenth and eighteenth-century controversy between the "ancients" and "moderns" can be seen in the fact that Temple's "An Essay upon Ancient and Modern Learning" (1690), was directly inspired by Burnet's Theory.³ In the opening paragraphs of his essay Temple remarked that he could not read Burnet's "panegyric of modern learning and knowledge" without feeling "some indignation, which no quality among men is so apt to raise in me as sufficiency, the worst composition out of

the pride and ignorance of mankind."⁴ A major by-product of Temple's essay appeared in Swift's Battle of the Books (1703), in which humanistic values, symbolized in the figure of the bee, are seen endangered by the moderns' spider-like rationalizing. Tuveson has shown how Swift made particular satiric reference to the world-makers' theories through such imagery in the Battle as that suggested by the spider's fear "that Nature was approaching to her final Dissolution."⁵ Another future Scriblerian, John Arbuthnot, voiced his distrust of the world-makers in An Examination of Dr. Woodward's Account of the Deluge (1698), where he chided Woodward for his disregard of Moses' "Relation" of the Creation and Deluge.⁶ An important result of these attacks was the prominent place the world-makers' ideas later assumed in the Scriblerian campaign against false learning: almost two dozen Scriblerian works, including the Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus, Three Hours After Marriage and Gulliver's Travels, were concerned with ridiculing various aspects of Burnet's, Whiston's and Woodward's speculations.⁷ Pope's close familiarity with the world-makers' theories has been noted⁸ by several critics, but the vital relationship which exists between the Scriblerian campaign against the world-makers and Pope's Dunciad has not as yet been explored.

Aubrey Williams has shown how theatrical elements pervade the entire Dunciad, and how in Book III, a charged theatrical metaphor occurs in the vision of the dunces'

conflagration-like destruction of the world and creation of a "new world" of Dulness. This "single vision (of uncreation and creation)," Williams comments, "is an imaginative device whose function is to 'concretize' sweeping alterations in the more intangible world of values."⁹ My thesis is that Pope's theatrical imagery throughout the Dunciad exists, in part, to mirror the sweeping alterations of values contained in the world-makers' scientific progressivist concepts. This chapter will demonstrate this thesis by examining the background and significance of Pope's use of stage metaphor in the first three books of the Dunciad (1743);¹⁰ in the next chapter we will show how Pope employs stage imagery in Book IV of the Dunciad to carry on and enrich this attack on the world-makers.

I

In tracing the larger significances in the use of the stage metaphor up to the eighteenth century we have seen how the metaphor functioned primarily as a symbolic expression of man's part in divine order. A central idea in the traditional concept of the world as a divine theatrum mundi was the idea that man's duty was to act out his assigned role; that role received, however, differing ontological and moral emphases in the various formulations of the world-stage concept. In the ethical

perspective of the Platonist and the Stoic, which emphasized man's grandeur as an essentially spiritual and/or rational creature, man misplayed his part by failing to overcome his "lower," animal nature through a lack of spiritual and rational self-perfection. But in the Christian view of man's dual state of grandeur and misère, man was rather seen continually misplaying his role by failing to recognize his own fallen, but redeemable condition; in his inherited role as both the son of Adam and the heir of Heaven, the Christian acted his "true" part by recognizing his own imperfections and by trusting divine wisdom to lead him to his goal of salvation. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, furthermore, the world-stage concept came to reflect, in the works of such Platonists as Juan Vives, Henry More and Thomas Burnet, the idea of man's power to progressively transcend his "lower" animal affinities; and in More and Burnet this idea received unique expression in their notions that the "great plot" of the divine drama involved new earthly scenes of man's increasing spiritual-rational perfection. Throughout this same period, however, such Christian humanists as Erasmus, Thomas More and Shakespeare also sought to retain more traditional Christian views of man's inherited perplexities and frailties in the divine theatre. The stage imagery which appears in Pope's works is closely linked to these latter views of man's innate limitations on

God's stage; Pope's theatrical imagery in the Dunciad, moreover, is subtly formulated to reveal the dangers inherent in Burnet's views of man's new destiny of perfection in the divine drama.

In an early letter, written to Henry Cromwell on August 29, 1709, Pope used stage metaphor to comment on his friend's recent departure from London:

. . . I find you vary your Life in the Scene at least, tho' not in the Action; for tho' Life for the most part, like an old Play, be still the same (, yet) now and then a New Scene may make it more entertaining. As for myself, (I) wou'd not have my life a very Regular Play; let it be a good merry Farce, a G ds (name) and a figg for the Critical Unities! . . .

11

Pope then went on to elaborate upon man's "Play" in the "Great Theatre" of life:

A true modern Life is like a true Modern Play. . . Every actor is much better known by his having the same Face, then by his keeping the same Character: For we change our minds as often as they can their Parts. . . .

I have dwelt the longer on this argument, because I persuade myself it might be usefull at this time when we have no other Theatre, to divert ourselves at this Great one. Here is a glorious Standing Comedy of Fools, at which every Man is heartily merry, and thinks himself an unconcern'd Spectator. . . .

12

Pope's theatrical imagery here significantly reappears in his treatment of the relationship of life and art in an Epistle to Miss Blount, With the Works of Voiture (1712). After paying tribute to the "gay Thoughts" (l. 1) of the French poet-letter writer, Vincent de Voiture, Pope says of himself:

Let the strict Life of graver Mortals be
A long, exact, and serious Comedy,
In ev'ry Scene some Moral let it teach;
· · · · ·
Let mine, an innocent gay Farce appear,
And more Diverting still than Regular,
Have Humour, Wit, a native Ease and Grace;
Tho' not too strictly bound to Time and Place:
Criticks in Wit, or Life, are hard to please,
Few write to those, and none can live to these.

13.

In the "Great Theatre" of life, where man constantly changes his mind and shifts his character, the application of certain rules of human behavior can be seen to be as sterile as the application of the rules of the unities of "Time and Place" to drama. Throughout his Epistle Pope shows how, in the midst of the "false Shows" (l. 47) of a society whose rules of conduct often operate only to falsify the truth of human passions, "Humor, Wit, a native Ease and Grace" may provide the necessary understanding of, and tolerance towards, human frailties. And at the end of his poem, Pope suggests to Miss Blount and to his reader how, in the "Standing Comedy of Fools" in which every man is heartily involved, "Good Humour" (seen as a proper ordering of the inner self to life's complexities) teaches "Charms to last" (l. 61), and binds the heart with ease and strength.

Pope's most significant use of stage metaphor as an imaginative expression of man's place in the world occurs in his An Essay on Man (1733-4). In the beginning of the Essay, the poet proposes to explore the "scene of Man":

Let us (since Life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die)
Expatriate free o'er all this scene of Man;
A mighty maze! but not without a plan;

Eye Nature's walks, shoot Folly as it flies,
And catch the Manners living as they rise;
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can;
But vindicate the ways of God to Man.

(Epistle I, ll. 3-6, 13-16)

Pope's allusions to "scene" and to "manners" in this opening passage of the Essay suggest one of the poem's principal thematic concerns--to "vindicate the ways of God to Man" by showing how man can enact his true part on the divinely planned stage of the world. In his introduction to the Essay, Maynard Mack, comparing the tone of Dryden's Religio Laici to that of a man recounting what he has seen at a play, points out that "Pope's tone in the Essay is different. It is that of an actor in the play, shifting with the situation, not only from grave to gay and lively to severe, but from scorn to pity. . . ." ¹⁴ This tone, which can be seen in Pope's opening allusion to man's short stay on the world stage, strongly pervades the whole poem as we see Pope, in the guise of an actor in a cosmic play, shifting through the various movements of man's brief show in a divine drama.

In Epistle I of the Essay, Pope shows how man can play his proper role in that drama only when he first accepts his own limitations in the universal scheme of creation. Throughout this Epistle Pope visualizes man's desire to leave his appointed sphere, and to soar above the "scene of Man":

What would this Man? Now upward will he soar,
And little less than Angel, would be more;
Now looking downwards, just as griev'd appears
To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears; . . .
(11. 173-6)

Such an action in seen, in effect, as a blasphemous
attempt to "uncreate" divine order:

In Pride, in reas'ning Pride, our error lies;
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.
Aspiring to be Angels, Men rebel;
And who but wishes to invert the laws
Of ORDER, sins against th' Eternal Cause.
(11. 123-4, 128-130)

The second Epistle continues this attack on man's Satanic
hubris by first emphasizing the importance of self-
knowledge in instructing man in the truth of his own
"dual" nature--the divinely ordained duality of soul and
body, reason and passion, within man which makes him
"created half to rise, and half to fall; / Great lord
of all things, yet a prey to all" (11. 14-15). In his
introduction to the Essay, Mack has pointed out that

the kinds of conduct to be repudiated /In the
second Epistle/ are all those which tend to
make man glorify himself as a creature of mind
alone. . . . Typical instances are the pre-
tensions of natural philosophy, of Platonist
metaphysics and of neo-Platonic mysticism,
which fancies it can put off body altogether.

16

At the end of this second Epistle, Pope makes elaborate
use of theatrical metaphor to reveal the folly of those
natural philosophers who would "mount where Science
guides" (l. 19), or of those who would "soar with Plato
to th' empyreal sphere" (l. 23), or finally, of those who,

with the Stoics, in "lazy Apathy" would "boast / Their
Virtue fix'd . . . as in a frost" (ll. 101-2).

As part of his general argument that the "Ends of
Providence and general Good are answered in our Passions
and Imperfections,"¹⁷ Pope places the various, shifting
ages of man's life in a graphic theatrical setting:

Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law,
Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a straw:
Some livelier play-thing gives his youth delight,
A little louder, but as empty quite:
Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage;
And beads and pray'r-books are the toys of age:
Pleas'd with this bauble still, as that before;
'Till tir'd he sleeps, and Life's poor play is o'er!
Mean-while Opinion gilds with varying rays
Those painted clouds that beautify our days;
Each want of happiness by Hope supply'd,
And each vacuity of sense by Pride:
These build as fast as knowledge can destroy;
In Folly's cup still laughs the bubble, joy.

(Epistle II, ll. 275-288)

This poignant portraiture of man "the child" engaged in
his "poor play" is, of course, a central part of Pope's
purpose of bringing man to a recognition of his own
built-in infirmities. Here man performs, in his role as
the "jest" of the world, in the bauble-spectacle of life;
on the riper "stage" between the "rattles" of youth and
the "beads" of age, man lives in a play world of "scarfs,
garters and gold," a theatre of "painted clouds," whose
gilding beautifies his day. While man's truest "Joy"
resides in this bubble ("deceptive show")¹⁸ of Folly, all
of his self-deceiving vanities are not given in vain,
for, as the lines which close this Epistle remind us,

Ev'n mean Self-love becomes, by force divine,
The scale to measure others wants by thine.
See! and confess, one comfort still must rise,
'Tis this, Tho' Man's a fool, yet God is wise.
(11. 291-4)

Under the direction of a wise God, man's self-serving vanities and passionate instincts--"mean Self-love"--can lead to mankind's chief concern, charity; the "Ends of Providence and general Good" are mysteriously served by the "Passions and Imperfections" which make up man's play world. And in the following epistle of the Essay Pope shows how, ultimately, in the bubble theatre of life,

. . . all Mankind's concern is Charity:
All must be false that thwart this One great End,
And all of God, that bless Mankind or mend.
(Epistle III, 11. 308-310)

In the fourth and last Epistle of this poem, Pope visualizes man enacting his proper role in the global comedy by moving in and through "Self-love" towards "Love of God and Love of Man" (l. 340). "Act well your part, there all the honour lies" (l. 194), Pope remarks near the beginning of this Epistle, and at its end we see man rising now, not to the heights of boundless pride, but to the "height of Charity" which exists in the "boundless heart":

Self-love thus push'd to social, to divine,
Gives thee to make thy neighbour's blessing thine.
Is this too little for the boundless heart?
Extend it, let thy enemies have part:
Grasp the whole worlds of Reason, Life, and Sense,
In one close system of Benevolence:
Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,
And height of Bliss but height of Charity.

God loves from Whole to Parts: but human soul
Must rise from Individual to the Whole.
Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;
The centre mov'd, a circle strait succeeds,
Another still, and still another spreads,
Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace,
His country next, and next all human race,
Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind
Take ev'ry creature in, of ev'ry kind;
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,
And Heav'n beholds its image in his /man's/ breast.
(ll. 353-372)

Where the eye of Heaven earlier surveyed man's timeless
efforts to transcend his assigned role,

Oh sons of earth! attempt ye still to rise,
By mountains pil'd on mountains, to the skies?
Heav'n still with laughter the vain toil surveys,
(Epistle IV, ll. 73-75)

it now beholds with a smile man "rising" to the "Whole"
by taking into his heart every foolish player on the
stage of the world. The "great directing Mind of All"
(I, l. 266) thus provides for man's restoration not
through any blasphemous effort to set himself apart from
his own nature, but through religious trust that he can
regain within himself the paradise he has lost.

The strong affinity which exists between Pope's use
of the theatrical metaphor in the Essay and earlier
Christian humanists' uses of it is suggested in Pope's
allusion to the role which "Opinion" plays in producing
happiness in man's stage world. Thus, in The Praise of
Folly (1511), Erasmus had Stultitia defend the "pleasures"
of folly by noting how "the happiness of a man . . .
resides in opinion," and how "the mind of man is so
constructed that it is taken far more with disguises than

with realities." ¹⁹ And in picturing how the imprudent man would strip off all the "masks" which make up the comedy of life, Stultitia argued that "the part of a truly prudent man, on the contrary, is (since we are mortal) not to aspire to wisdom beyond his station. . . ." ²⁰

In using theatrical metaphor to suggest man's folly in desiring god-like knowledge and virtue, Erasmus insisted that man play out the comedy of life with all its passion-motivated vanities, for such vanities, when divinely directed, could lead man to the "foolish wisdom" of Christian charity and tolerance. Like Erasmus, Pope also underlines the theme of life as a "Standing Comedy," and stresses the value of man's passions as an important part of the divine scheme to show that man's true ethical objectives lie in the paradoxical wisdom of Christian charity and patience. And like the optimism expressed in the theatrical metaphors of Erasmus, Thomas More, and Shakespeare, Pope's optimism in the Essay on Man lies in seeing that "Tho' Man's a fool, yet God is wise"-- though man continually deludes himself in believing that he can rise above his own imperfections on the world stage, God wisely directs his complex nature towards its true goal, the imago Dei.

Pope's Essay on Man stresses the importance of self-knowledge in humbling man to enable him to recognize his proper "role" on the cosmic stage, and suggests how man's union with divine order might be thus realized. In the

Dunciad (1743) Pope shows how a lack of self-knowledge, a lack leading man to a "self conceit of greater abilities"²¹ results in the "uncreation" of that order. The Dunciad's vision of uncreation is presented through an artful use of stage metaphor by which activities on the "lesser" world of the human theatre reveal man's refusal to play his proper role in the "greater" theatre of life. By means of this intricate theatrical perspective, Pope makes stage anarchy in the pantomimic theatre reflect the anarchy which the dunces produce in the real world of human affairs, until finally, at the close of the poem, we are given a theatrical vision suggestive, in its most profound dimensions, of the end of the universal drama of existence itself:

Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall;
And Universal Darkness buries All.

(IV, ll. 655-6)

In Book III of the Dunciad this theatrical perspective takes on its most compelling form when the hero-dunce Cibber is afforded a vision which is described in terms of pantomimic stage settings. These stage settings of the "conflagration-like" destruction of a theatrical world (III, ll. 235-240), and the "recreation" of a "new world" (III, ll. 241ff.), function primarily as metaphoric insinuations of a "larger" destruction of world order, and a "miscreation" of a new order in which man is seen to usurp the functions of the divine stage manager. This usurpation is artfully suggested in Pope's description

of the wonders of Dulness's future reign:

. In yonder cloud behold,
Whose sarsenet skirts are edg'd with flamy gold,
A matchless Youth! his nod these worlds controuls,
Wings the red lightning, and the thunder rolls.
Angel of Dulness, sent to scatter round
Her magic charms o'er all unclassic ground:
Yon stars, yon suns, he rears at pleasure higher,
Illumes their light, and sets their flames on fire.
Immortal Rich! how calm he sits at ease

.
Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.
(III, ll. 253-261, 264)

In this vision of Rich's manipulations of his pantomimic stage properties Pope brilliantly captures, in his use of theatrical metaphor in the poem, man's blasphemous attempt to recreate the "Great Theatre" of Life in his own image.

In his study of the Dunciad, Williams has pointed out the correspondence which exists between Rich's actions as the "Angel of Dulness," and the Essay on Man's concern with that "reas'ning pride," which makes man rush angel-²²like to the skies to "counterwork the Eternal Cause."

Several other parallels between the Dunciad and the Essay on Man support the idea that Rich's control of his pantomimic creations exists to mirror man's pride-ridden attempt to subvert divine order. The imagery of Rich's "nodding control" over his "worlds" alludes, of course, to the general movement of machinery on the pantomimic stage; but these "worlds" can be seen to have more particular reference to the preceding image of Rich's creations of cosmical scenes in which "other planets circle other suns" (l. 244). In Epistle I of the Essay on Man Pope

argued that only God or an angel could know "What other planets circle other suns" (l. 26), and, later on in this epistle, he pictured how man, in his attempts to attain angelic-like powers, would "break" divine "ORDER" and have "Planets and Suns run lawless thro' the sky" (l. 252). Rich's theatrical actions in rearing new stars and suns, in making rivers rise upward (l. 245), in winging the red lightning, and directing the storm, find further counterparts in the Essay in Pope's concern with "The absurdity of man conceiting himself the final cause of the creation. . . ." ²³ This conceit, which is perhaps most vividly illustrated in the following lines of Epistle I,

Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,
. . . Pride answers, "Tis for mine.
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise,"
(ll. 131-2, 139)

impells man to seek an angel-like knowledge of matters of which only God can know, "Whose hand the light'ning forms, / Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms" (I, ll. 157-8). The fact that this "conceit" is also a prime motivating force in the dunces' creation of their new world is further suggested in Pope's vision, in Book IV, of the dunces' efforts to "Make God Man's Image, Man the Final Cause" (l. 478).

Pope's pervasive concern in the Essay on Man with the way in which, "Aspiring to be Angels, Men rebel" on God's stage, is also of fundamental importance to the Dunciad. Pope implies in the latter poem that Dulness

"breathes" into her followers a perverse angelic estimation of themselves, an estimation which makes Rich soar to his theatrical firmament to take over divine control of the world. The theatrical vision which Cibber receives in Book III takes place in the "inclosed" "Temple" of Dulness; in Book I Pope pictured Dulness leading Cibber into her Temple (described here as "sacred Dome") thus:

She bids him wait her to her sacred Dome:
Well pleas'd he enter'd, and confess'd his home.
So Spirits ending their terrestrial race,
Ascend, and recognize their Native Place.
(I, ll. 265-8)

And in his 1729 notes to the "sacred Dome," Pope described Cibber's elation in his new career as king of the dunces by observing how Cibber "no sooner enters, but he Reconnoiters the place of his original; as Plato says the Spirits shall do, at their entrance into the celestial Regions."²⁴ Following his ascent out of the flesh and the "terrestrial race" in Book I, Cibber is immediately made one of Dulness's "Chosen" (l. 227).

In the Essay on Man Pope used theatrical imagery to show how man could act his part "with honour" on God's stage as both the "glory and jest" of the world; in the Dunciad we see man, in his profane assumption of a new angelic-like role, at work dismantling that stage. The "trivial things" associated with duncial leaders like Cibber and Rich accordingly take on profound symbolic dimensions throughout the poem, for these dunces are made emblems of the "dire offense" of man's satanic tendency

to transcend his assigned part in God's theatre. The remainder of this chapter will show how Pope's presentation of the proud players of the Dunciad contains an intricate attack on the world-makers' notions of man's new cosmic destiny on the divine stage.

II

While Pope's use of the theatre as a metaphoric microcosm of the greater world of life derives from traditional implications of the theatrical analogy, his use of this device in the Dunciad can also be seen vitally connected to a widespread eighteenth-century view of the Universe, or Nature, as a dramatic spectacle set before Man by God for his entertainment, instruction, and moral improvement. "The whole Universe," Addison writes in Spectator #387 (May 24, 1713), "is a kind of Theatre filled with Objects that either raise in us Pleasure, Amusement, or Admiration. . . .";²⁵ and in his Guardian #103 (July 9, 1713), Addison expounded on this idea:

What a glorious Show are those Beings [angels] entertained with, that can look into this great Theatre of Nature, and see Myriads of such tremendous Objects [celestial phenomena] wandering through those immeasurable Depths of Ether and running their Appointed Courses? . . . they are very proper Objects for our Imaginations to contemplate, that we may form more exalted Notions of infinite Wisdom and Power, and learn to think humbly of ourselves, and of all the little Works of Human Invention.

This Augustan interest in the Universe or Nature as a dramatic spectacle also received elaborate expression in Guardian #169 (September 24, 1713), a work which has been attributed to Pope, and is published in Norman Ault's edition of The Prose Works of Alexander Pope: Volume I, The Earlier Works, 1711-20.²⁷ In the beginning of the Guardian article, the author pictures himself entertained in God's theatre:

I regard my self as one placed by the Hand of God in the midst of an ample Theatre, in which the Sun, Moon and Stars, . . . exhibit an elegant Entertainment to the Understanding, as well as to the Eye. Thunder and Lightning, Rain and Hail, the painted Bow, and the glaring Comets, are Decorations of this mighty Theatre.²⁸

This "Entertainment" then leads the author to note of this divine "Theatre":

. . . how few are there who attend to the Drama of Nature, its Artificial Structure, and those admirable Machines, whereby the Passions of a Philosopher are gratefully agitated, and his Soul affected with the sweet Emotions of Joy and Surprise.

29

Such theatrical allusions as these help throw light upon Pope's theatrical presentation of the dunces in Book III: for example, Cibber's joy and surprise,

Joy fills his soul, joy innocent of thought;
"What pow'r," he cries, "what pow'r these wonders
wrought,"
(11. 249-250)

at Rich's control of the theatrical machinery of suns, moons and stars, of the "red lightning" and the "thunder roll," can be seen as a sinister embodiment of man's

wresting the great "Show" of Nature from divine to human agency.

Through his analogy between the human and larger cosmic "show" in the Dunciad, Pope furthermore significantly suggests the idea of a new, perverse plot of progress in the great "Show" of God's theatre--Dulness's destined, and perverse, moral and social advance towards a new mechanistic and egocentric order. For throughout Book III of the poem the shifting of scenes in the pantomimic show is made to reflect new cosmic scenes of Dulness's "fated" advance towards the triumphant "scene" of her new world; and in Book IV this new world is seen established as a reality in the final "scene" of Dulness's mechanistic and egocentric "Kingdom of the Dull upon Earth."³⁰

Thus in lines 61-6 of Book III Settle tells Cibber of Dulness's intention to "fire" Cibber's brain with "scenes" of her past and future glories:

. . . our Queen unfolds to vision true
Thy mental eye, for thou hast much to view:
Old scenes of glory, times long cast behind
Shall, first recall'd, rush forward to thy mind:
Then stretch thy sight o'er all her rising reign,
And let the past and future fire thy brain;
(11. 61-66)

and immediately after Cibber surveys the "scenes" of Dulness's past glory, Settle describes her imminent victory in England in terms of a new, destined "scene" of triumph:

And see, my son! the hour is on its way,
That lifts our Goddess to imperial sway;
This fav'rite Isle, long sever'd from her reign,
Dove-like, she gathers to her wings again.
Now look thro' Fate! behold the scene she draws!
(ll. 123-127)

Finally, Cibber's "mental eye" is graced with the prophetic vision of Dulness's future world, a vision which is described in terms of the shifting of scenes on the London pantomimic stage. In his "Argument" to Book III of the 1729 version of the Dunciad, Pope described Cibber's vision thus:

On a sudden the Scene shifts, and a vast number
of miracles and prodigies appear. . . . On this
subject Settle breaks into a congratulation, yet
not unmix'd with concern, that his own times
were but the types of these; He prophecies . . .
the throne of Dulness advanced over both the
Theatres: Then how her sons shall preside in the
seats of arts and sciences, till in conclusion
all shall return to their original Chaos: A
scene, of which the present Action of the Dunciad
is but a Type or Foretaste. . . .

31

While Settle's prophecy that Dulness will be advanced over "both Theatres" in the final "scene" of her new "Kingdom" of the "Dull," alludes, doubtless, to the theatres of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, it can also be seen, in the light of Pope's use of the pantomimic "show" as a mirror of the larger "Show" of Nature, to symbolize Dulness's triumph in the cosmic as well as the human theatre. And this "scene" of Dulness's triumph on the cosmic stage of the poem, a triumph symbolized in the dunces' replacement of God with a Mechanic Cause (l. 475) and their inversion of divine order in making "God Man's

Image, Man the final cause" (l. 478), leads finally to the destruction of the divine drama and to "Universal Darkness."

Dulness can thus be seen in the Dunciad as a kind of anti-divine stage manager in the great "Show" of the Universe, ushering in a series of destined scenes of perverse progress, culminating in the final cosmic stage setting of her "new world." The major "scenes" in the dunces' progress on the cosmic stage of the poem involve, of course, the conflagration-like uncreation of the world and recreation of a "new world to Nature's laws unknown" (III, l. 241). The wide range and significance of these "scenes" and the dunces' entire perverse progress towards their mechanistic, egocentric order can be fully seen against the background of the world-makers' scientific progressivist concepts.

The idea of the world as a cosmic stage was, as we have seen, a central imaginative device in the works of the chief world-maker, Thomas Burnet. In following More's idea of man's spiritual capacity to gradually reascend the great "chain of being" to his original angel-like existence, Burnet also stressed More's idea of this future progress as the basic "plot" in the divine drama--the drama was to end with a series of new earthly scenes of spiritual and rational perfection as a prelude to the final cosmic setting of the millennial "Kingdom of the Just on earth." The essentially religious ethos of

aspiration in More's "apocalyptic optimism" underwent, however, radical transformation in Burnet's virtual equation of man's spiritual progress with future advances in scientific and philosophical knowledge. And Burnet's views of man's cosmic progress in the great "Show" of Nature³² afforded, as we have seen, the framework for later eighteenth-century notions of man's natural progress towards a historical age of utopian bliss.

As we have also seen, Burnet visualized his new plot of progress and such major events in it as the "Conflagration" and the "New World" of the Millennium in terms of cosmic stage settings. In presenting these events Burnet made lavish reference to theatrical activities, and considered himself as a sort of stage impresario,³³ as the following excerpts from the Theory will show. In the beginning of the Theory, he spoke of man's part on the world stage thus:

seeing it hath faln to our lot to act upon this Stage, to have our present home and residence here, it seems most reasonable, and the place design'd by Providence, where we should first imploy our thoughts to understand the works of God and Nature.

34

Burnet then unfolded for the reader, through his accounts of the past and future history of man and his world stage, what he called the great "Plot" or "Mystery"³⁵ of the divine drama of Nature. Boasting that through his Theory the reader could view the "Origin of the Earth," and "those States of it that are already past,"³⁶ Burnet turned with

satisfaction to prophecy: "by the conduct of the same Theory, we will pursue its [the world-stage's] Fate and History through Future Ages. . . ."³⁷ and speaking of his account of the creation of the original primitive earth (which would reappear in the future "new world" of the millennium) Burnet wrote: "I hope in the meantime to entertain the mind with scenes no less pleasing draw but the Curtain and these Scenes will appear or something very like them."³⁸ And throughout the Theory³⁹ Burnet showed how this shifting of the various scenes in the great "Show" of Nature would lead to the penultimate scene of the Conflagration, after which would occur the concluding "scene" of the "new world" of the "Kingdom of the Just upon earth." The mechanical action following the Conflagration, Burnet remarked, would "bring another face of things, other Scenes, and a new World upon the Stage."⁴⁰

The world-makers' apocalyptic speculations on the Conflagration received much satiric attention in the works of the Scriblerians. Thus in his God's Revenge against Punning (1716), Pope, noting how "Socinianism, Arianism and Whistonism triumphed" in the streets of London, satirically glanced at Whiston's millennial prophecies by predicting the visitation of a more "dreadful Conflagration."⁴¹ Gay's A True and Faithful Narrative of What Passed In London, published in "The Third Volume" of the Swift-Pope Miscellanies in Prose and Verse (1732), also ridiculed

Whiston's apocalyptic prophecies by picturing him making the following "solemn and dreadful Prediction" of a "general Conflagration": ". . . on Friday next this World shall be no more. . . . In that instant the Comet shall appear, of which I have heretofore warn'd you." ⁴² In his Gulliver's Travels Swift also poked fun at Whiston by satirizing contemporary speculations on how "the Earth very narrowly escaped a Brush from the Tail of the last Comet, which would have infallibly reduced it to Ashes. . . ." ⁴³

Two years after the publication of Gulliver's Travels, another Scriblerian piece appeared, Peri Bathous, the companion piece to the 1728 Dunciad. In Chapter XV of Peri Bathous, Pope has his duncial champion of the "moderns," Martinus Scriblerus, observe how "A Chapter or two of the Theory of the Conflagration, well circumstanced; and done into Verse" could be used in the description of a "Burning Town." ⁴⁴ In her edition of Peri Bathous, Edna Leake Steeves comments on this allusion:

Theory of the Conflagration. Thomas Burnet's Telluris Theoria Sacra. . . . The Third Book is concerned with the final conflagration of the earth as forecast in Revelation. Probably Pope had in mind particularly Burnet's effort, in Chapter XIII of Book III, to envision a scene which Burnet himself deprecatingly suggests "would seem to most men romantic."

⁴⁵

In the Dunciad's theatrical depiction of the conflagration-like destruction of the world Pope puts "into Verse" several important apocalyptic details from Burnet's

"Theory of the Conflagration," and applies these details to the "circumstances" of contemporary pantomimic productions.

Book III's theatrical vision of the dunces' "new world" begins with a series of images laden with apocalyptic resonances:
46

All sudden, Gorgons hiss, and Dragons glare,
And ten-horn'd fiends and Giants rush to war.
Hell rises, Heav'n descends, and dance on Earth:
Gods, imps, and monsters, music, rage, and mirth,
A fire, a jig, a battle, and a ball,
'Till one wide conflagration swallows all.

(11. 235-240)

In his popular account of the "Conflagration," Burnet
47
visualized the "dreadful scene" of a world "swallowed up
48
in a Lake of Fire," fused apocalyptic images of ten-horned
49
fiends and dragons with Dion Cassius's account of volcanic
eruptions (in which the "people thought that the Gyants
50
were making war against heaven"), compared the fire's
51
"rage" to the rout of an army in battle, and described
Heaven descending on earth, attacking the loosened fiends
52
of Hell. Burnet's "dreadful scene" was to be followed,
we recall, by "other Scenes" and a "new World upon the
Stage."

In Pope's imagery following the "wide conflagration,"
Dulness's "new world" appears on the pantomimic stage:

Thence a new world to Nature's laws unknown,
Breaks out refulgent, with a heav'n its own:
Another Cynthia her new journey runs,
And other planets circle other suns.

(11. 241-244)

In describing the effects of the "Conflagration," Burnet

speculated that in the new millennial world the earth's axis would be altered in its position towards the sun, and that, as a result of this alteration, the whole planetary system would appear changed. Thus in Chapter XI of his "Theory of the Conflagration" he pointed out that the "Anomalies and irregularities" which would occur in the motions of the "Planetary Heavens" following the Conflagration would be due to

that change of situation in the Axis of the Earth, which we have formerly mentioned; whereby the Stars will seem to change their places, and the whole Universe to take another posture;

53

and in Chapter XII, he noted how

The Moon and the Stars will be confus'd, and irregular, both in their light and motions; as if the whole frame of Heaven was out of order, and all the laws of Nature were broken or expir'd.

54

In A New Theory of the Earth Whiston also depicted similar "vast Changes in the Planetary World" as the result of

"The Access and Approach" of comets during the Conflagra-

⁵⁵tion. The world-makers' notions of such planetary changes provoked much scientific, poetic and satiric

comment during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. ⁵⁶

Notable examples of the latter can be seen in Swift's allusion, in Gulliver's Travels, to Whiston's apocalyptic speculations on the "Progress and Returns of Comets, with

the Changes of Motion in the Sun, Moon and Stars," ⁵⁷and Henry Fielding's reference, in his Covent-Garden Journal, No. 70 (November 11, 1752), to the world-makers' scheme

of "changing the Poles and diurnal Rotations of the
Globe. . . ." ⁵⁸ It is particularly noteworthy, furthermore,
that Burnet also identified his "new world" with Virgil's
"Elysium," a place which, he said, was "irradiated with a
greater Light, and enjoyed a Sun and Heaven of its own," ⁵⁹
for, in the notes to his image of the "new world," with
"a heav'n its own," Pope refers to Virgil's description
of Elysium in Aeneid, VI. ⁶⁰

Pope's following descriptions in Book III of the
Dunciad of rivers rising upward, and whales sporting in
woods (ll. 245-6), echo a significant image in the
Scriblerian farce Three Hours After Marriage (1717):

The roaring Seas o'er the tall Woods have broke,
And Whales now perch upon the Sturdy Oak.

⁶¹

The "roaring Seas" in these lines allude, as Nicolson has
pointed out, to the Deluge "waters of Burnet, Woodward,
Whiston." ⁶² The collaboration of Gay, Pope and Arbuthnot
in the Three Hours After Marriage produced a hilarious
and far-ranging satire on the world-makers, particularly
Woodward, whose speculations and antiquarian activities
were mocked in the speeches of the main character,
"Fossile." ⁶³

In the first act of the play, Fossile's niece, Phoebe
Clinket, moved by her uncle's scientific interests to write
a drama called "The Universal Deluge," notes how the
"Deluge" is a subject

So adapted for tragical Machines! So proper to excite the Passions! Not in the least encumber'd with Episodes! The Vray-semblance and the Miraculous are linkt together with such Propriety!

64

Tuveson has noted in his study of "Swift and the World-Makers" how Phoebe's remarks here contain sly allusions to the world-makers' scientific efforts to explain the Deluge by linking the miraculous with the natural.

65

Another important aspect of the satire on the world-makers in Three Hours After Marriage can be seen in the connection the Scriblerians make between the world-makers' "theatrical" description of the "Deluge" and contemporary theatrical productions. After declaring her subject, Phoebe reads the opening stage setting of her drama to Plotwell (a character who, significantly enough, allegedly represented Colley Cibber):

The Scene opens, and discovers the Heavens cloudy. A prodigious Shower of Rain, at a distance appears the Top of the Mountain Parnassus, all the Fields beneath are over-flowed, there are seen Cattle and Men swimming. The Tops of Steeples rise above the Flood, with Men and Women perching on their Weather-Cocks.

66

This opening "episode" of the "over-flowed Fields" in Phoebe's theatrical presentation of the world-makers' "Deluge" is clearly no distant relation to the absurd pantomimic wonders which "Dulness and her sons admire."

Pope's theatrical depiction in Book III of the Dunciad of Dulness's "new world" culminates in a significant vision:

And last, to give the whole creation grace,
Lo! one vast Egg produces human race.

(11. 247-248)

This "vast Egg" imagery can be seen to be vitally connected with Dulness's principal creational activity throughout the Dunciad. In Book I Pope describes Dulness's "mighty wings out-spread / To hatch a new Saturnian age of Lead" (11. 27-8), and in Book III he carefully prepares the reader for the "vast Egg" image through Settle's description of Dulness's future reign: "Dove-like, she gathers to her wings again. / Now look thro' Fate! behold the scene she draws" (11. 126-7). These creational images are meant, of course, to echo the Miltonic images of God's creation of the world as part of Pope's mock-epic purpose of imprinting a bathetic stamp on the dunces' own "wild" pantomimic "creations." Pope's theatrical vision of the creation of a "vast Egg" world from out of the chaos of a "wide conflagration" has, however, several notable and striking connections with the world-makers' theatrical vision of a "new world."

One of the most essential features of Burnet's account of sacred history consisted in his view of the antedeluvian world, and the "new world" of the millennium, as egg-shaped. In her Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, Miss Nicolson has noted how Burnet's Theory "reintroduced into the thinking of a highly sophisticated generation, which had almost forgotten it, the tradition of the 'Mundane Egg'." ⁶⁸
This tradition, which had its roots in ancient Orphic

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doctrines, had a compelling appeal for Burnet, and in Book II of his Theory he alluded to it thus:

There is still one remarkable Notion or Doctrine amongst the Ancients which we have not spoken to; tis partly Symbolical, and the propriety of the Symbol, or of the Application of it, hath been little understood; Tis their doctrine of the Mundane Egg, or their comparing the World to an Egg, and especially in the original composition of it. This seems to be a mean comparison, the World and an Egg, what proportion, or what resemblance betwixt these two things?

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It was, however, with no little satisfaction that Burnet later boasted that through his Theory he had "truly found out the Riddle of the Mundane Egg."⁷¹ The major, fundamental innovation which Burnet brought to this ancient notion of the world as an egg was in linking that notion to a "new world" following the Conflagration.

Burnet's notion of the antedeluvian and millennial worlds as egg-shaped produced widespread, and often sharp, theological, scientific and poetic reaction during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thus in his A Summary of Material Heads (1696), the theologian Archibald Lovell claimed that in Burnet's "Doctrine of an Egg-World" "we have all Religion, Virtue and Morality pelted out of the World, with one Rotten Egg thrown by a Left-handed Philosopher in Holy orders,"⁷² and in The Abyssinian Philosophy Confuted (1697), the scientist Robert St. Clair also assailed Burnet's "fancy of the World's being an Egg-Shell."⁷³ In a letter dated the following year, Archbishop William Nicolson included

Burnet's "roasted egg" theory among the current scientific
74
curiosities. References to Burnet's egg-world continued
throughout the eighteenth century, and in 1734, Mary
Chandler "versified" Burnet's theories in a long and
significant passage in The Description of Bath. Speaking
of Burnet's "ruined" world, Mrs. Chandler remarked:

Whether the Egg was by the Deluge broke,
Or Nature since has felt some other Shock;
Ingenious BURNET, thine's a pleasing Scheme,
A gay Delusion, if it be a Dream.
The shatter'd Rocks and Strata seen to say,
Nature is old and tends to her Decay.
Yet lovely in Decay, and green in Age,
Her beauty lasts her, to her latest Stage.

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Following her allusions to Burnet's "Egg" and Nature's
"latest Stage," Mrs. Chandler then put into verse the main
outline of Burnet's "Conflagration" and "New World":

. . . the pent Fires which at the Center burn,
Shall the whole Globe to one huge Cinder turn.
Then, like a Phoenix, she again shall rise,
And the New World be peopled from the Skies.

(11. 107-110)

The world-makers' "creations" may also be seen to
account in some measure for Pope's connection of the "vast
Egg" world in Book III with Dulness's "hatching" of a new
Saturnian Age in Book I. In his Theory Burnet showed at
great length how classical accounts of the Golden Age
supported his descriptions of both the egg-shaped ante-
deluvian world and the new restored world of the millen-
nium. The large influence which Burnet's descriptions
of a past and future "Golden Age" held in the early
eighteenth century has been recently stressed by several

critics. In describing how the "scenes" in his primitive earth were "very extraordinary and very different from our present Earth," Burnet observed that:

The Ancients have taken notice of all these in the first Ages of the World, or in their Golden Age, as they call it. . . . And 'tis manifest that their Golden Age was contemporary with our Paradise.

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And it is worth emphasizing that the "Golden Age" which the inhabitants of Burnet's earth enjoyed was to reappear only when the earth was dissolved in the chaos of the conflagration and would rise again in its original egg shape.

In the imagery following Dulness's "hatching" of the Golden Age in Book I, Dulness is seen introspectively creating a world of "new-born nonsense" out of Chaos:

Here she beholds the Chaos dark and deep,
Where nameless Somethings in their causes sleep,
'Till genial Jacob, or a warm Third day,
Call forth each mass, a Poem, or a Play:
How hints, like spawn, scarce quick in embryo lie,
How new-born nonsense first is taught to cry,
Maggot's half-form'd in rhyme exactly meet.

(ll. 55-61)

Like Cibber's vision of the "new world" in Book III, Dulness's vision of her world of "new-born nonsense" is presented in terms of grotesque pantomimic productions. The theatrical nature of Dulness's vision is indicated in lines 79-84:

All these, and more, the cloud-compelling Queen
Beholds thro' fogs, that magnify the scene.
She, tinsel'd o'er in robes of varying hues,

With self-applause her wild creation views;
Sees momentary monsters rise and fall,
And with her own fools-colours gilds them all.

This imagery of pantomimic "monsters" rising and falling in Dulness's mind can be seen to function as a foreshadowing of Book III's depiction of the pantomimic monsters which rise and fall in Cibber's mind--"Each Monster meets his likeness in thy mind" (III, l. 252).⁷⁹

Cibber's theatrical vision is linked, moreover, to Dulness's theatrical vision in another way. As Cibber's "new world" involves a sort of "hatching," through its image of the "one vast Egg" which "produces human race," Dulness's world of "new-born nonsense" involves a "hatching" of the products of her creation--her unformed products are called forth out of their "mass" on a "warm Third day," like "Maggots half-formed," and "like spawn," which "scarce quick in embryo lie." The world which Dulness creates out of "Chaos" in Book I can be thus seen as a kind of prototype of the world which rises out of the chaos of a conflagration in Book III.

The warmth of Pope's "Third day," suggests, as Sutherland points out, the "warmth sufficient for incubation";⁸⁰ the meaning of Pope's reference to "Third day" has, I believe, deeper significance. The description of Dulness's creation of her world on a "Third day" suggests, in line with Pope's extensive use of theological inversions in the poem, an allusion to the Biblical relation of the emergence of the earth from chaos on the third day of

creation. Pope's creational imagery has, however, a further and vital connection with the world-makers' accounts of an egg-shaped world originally created out of chaos and reappearing after the conflagration. In his description of the earth's original formation out of chaos, Burnet compared that formation to a kind of animal metamorphosis: "For as Little Creatures are wont to pass from an Egg or a Worm into one and another sort of Insects till they have gained the last Shape; so this⁸¹ habitable World was made out of Chaos."

In her Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, Miss Nicolson has traced the vital place Burnet's creational theories played in the "Third day" creational controversies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; an important aspect of the controversy surrounding Burnet involved his idea that the original antedeluvian earth was without oceans. Dulness's vision of a world of "new-born nonsense" spawned out of chaos leads into her further chaotic visions of time standing still and oceans turning to dry land; in lines 71-2 the Goddess sees

How Time himself stands still at her command,
Realms shift their place, and Ocean turns to land.
(*italics mine*)

Burnet's idea of an oceanless land in his antedeluvian world drew the fire of many seventeenth and eighteenth-century theologians and scientists: thus in his The Folly and Unreasonableness of Atheism (1693), Richard Bentley directed a section to ridiculing Burnet among those who

desire "the Ocean to be dry . . . and covered with Grass
82
and Trees"; and in his Boyle's lectures of 1711 and 1712,
William Derham placed Burnet among those

. . . who have objected against the distribution
of the earth and waters, as if the waters occupied
too large a part of the globe, which they think
would be of greater use, if it was dry land.

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Pope's imagery of Dulness's ability to make time
stand still suggests a further important allusion to
Burnet's egg-world. For in his Theory Burnet, noting how

The Ancients suppos'd, that in the reign of
Saturn, who was an Antedeluvian God, as I may
so call him, Time flow'd with a more even motion,

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argued that his "new world" would enjoy the same condition,
for by

taking a perpetual Aequinox, and fixing the
Heavens, you fix the life of Man too; which was
not then in such a rapid flux as it is now,
but seem'd to stand still as the Sun did once,
without declension.

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Burnet's descriptions of the creation of the primi-
tive egg-world, it is worth recalling, were in terms of
the shifting of stage settings--the "scenes" in this
"Golden Age" were, he said, different from the "scenes"
of the present earth, for 'tis in our World that the
Scenes are chang'd, and become more strange and Fantas-
86
tical." Dulness's vision in Book I of her prototypical
world of oceanless land and halted time is, as we have
seen, imagistically connected to Cibber's latter vision
of the new "vast Egg" world, for in the world-makers'

theories the "scene" of the original egg-shaped earth would be restored following the conflagration in the new egg-world of the "Kingdom of the Just upon earth."

In Book III of the Dunciad Pope thus carefully fuses the theatrical-philosophic "creations" of the world-makers with the absurd pantomimic stage "creations" which "Dulness and her sons admire!" (l. 228). And through this artful disposition of allusions within the context of duncery Pope suggests the way in which the world-makers' new plot of progress could lead to a despiritualization of the universe and a dark close to the divine drama itself.

III

In The Poetical Career of Alexander Pope, Robert Kilburn Root observed that the "progress of Dulness" in Book III of the Dunciad "may well have been the germinal idea of the whole satire."⁸⁷ The importance of this "progress of Dulness" is suggested in Pope's introductory statement to the 1729 Dunciad that "the third book, if well consider'd, seemeth to embrace the whole world."⁸⁸ In the Dunciad Pope makes many similar suggestions that something very more considerable than "Cibberian foreheads" looms throughout his poem: "The Author in this work had indeed a deep Intent,"⁸⁹ the notes to Book IV assure us; and in Book I Pope cautions us not to "mistake the Importance" of "the

Design of the Poet," for those, he says, "who have the true key will find he sports with nobler quarry, and embraces a larger compass. . . ." ⁹⁰ The "larger compass" of the Dunciad involves a comprehensive satire on widespread contemporary views of man's increasing moral and social progress--the significance of Pope's "sport" in the Dunciad with such "nobler quarry" as the world-makers can be fully seen in the light of his own Christian humanist vision of man's progress in God's divine drama.

In a recent article, Maynard Mack, noting that Pope's "poetry has apocalyptic mutterings in it from his earlier ⁹¹ years," comments:

Pope's poetry, like the book he was accustomed to call Scripture, begins with a garden and ends with a city. To be sure, the city in Revelation is a holy city, whereas the city in the 17⁴³ Dunciad is a version of Augustan London. Yet both are in an important sense visionary, and behind the Dunciad's city looms another that is more abiding: the eternal city of man's recurring dream of the civilized community, only one of whose names is Rome.

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Dulness's "Saturnian" age fundamentally represents, as Mack's remarks imply, a perversion of the Christian vision of the civilized society--a civitas which, though a pale mirror of the Civitas Dei, reflects the Christian's dream of restoring a semblance of his former state of perfection in a society of divinely sanctioned order and peace. Such a perversion is suggested in the Dunciad's major motif of "false restoration": in the beginning of Book IV Pope "sings" of Dulness's "Mysteries restor'd" (l. 5), of the

return of "Saturnian days of Lead and Gold" (l. 16), and, at the end of that book, of the "Restoration of Night and Chaos." ⁹³ This vision of the "restoration" of a chaotic Golden Age of Pride is vitally related to a major theological pattern of glory, ruin and restoration which appears in several of Pope's works.

In their introduction to An Essay on Criticism, E. Audra and Aubrey Williams have pointed out how this pattern informs the Essay's treatment of poetry and criticism, and have emphasized Pope's view of human history as a process of moral "restoration." ⁹⁴ In this view of history, based upon an aspect of the doctrine of primitivism which saw the world of man created perfect in Adam but fallen subsequently from this state, Pope relates the art and morals of the ancients to a former glorious "Golden Age" in which the ancients (like Adam) more fully understood "Unerring Nature" (l. 70), and thus more perfectly reflected its "One clear, unchang'd and Universal Light" (l. 71). This Golden Age is eulogized in Pope's description of the Ancients' timeless glories:

Still green with Bays each ancient Altar stands,
Above the reach of Sacrilegious Hands,
Secure from Flames, from Envy's fiercer Rage,
Destructive War, and all-involving Age.

Hail Bards Triumphant! born in happier Days.
(ll. 181-4, 189)

In turning in the Essay to the "ruined" state of this perfection--"No longer now that Golden Age appears" (l. 478)--Pope delineates man's present artistic and moral

failings, and sets forth the idea of a possible restoration of the lost Golden Age through moral reformation. Such a reformation involves, first and foremost, humility, for

OF all the Causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring Judgment, and misguide the Mind,
What the weak Head with strongest Byass rules,
Is Pride, the never-failing Vice of Fools.
(11. 201-204)

This general "restoration" theme also informs Pope's Essay on Man which places the entire "scene of Man" in a theological landscape of glory, ruin and restoration, through which man discovers and enacts his proper role⁹⁵ under the eye of God. In Epistle III of the Essay Pope visualizes a past Golden Age in which man, humbly following Nature's "unerring Light," lived as one with God and all creation:

The state of Nature was the reign of God:
Self-love and Social at her birth began,
Union the bond of all things, and of Man.
Pride then was not:
.
In the same temple, the resounding wood,
All vocal beings humn'd their equal God:
The shrine with gore unstain'd, with gold undrest;
(11. 148-151, 155-157)

and in the fourth Epistle Pope pictures the "restoration" of this Age, with man and Nature once again humbly united with God's order through charity:

Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind
Take ev'ry creature in, of ev'ry kind;
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,
And Heav'n beholds its image in his breast.
(11. 369-372)

Pope's view of human history is firmly rooted in such visions of moral "restoration," and these visions are of crucial importance in understanding the "apocalyptic mutterings" which run through his poetry, particularly the Dunciad. An important illustration of these apocalyptic utterances occurs at the end of Windsor-Forest, when the portrait of an England under a Stuart Reign--"Albion's Golden Days" (l. 424)--is clothed in the apocalyptic garb of a new, Messianic Golden Age:

In Brazen Bonds shall barb'rous Discord dwell:
Gigantick Pride, pale Terror, gloomy Care,
And mad Ambition, shall attend her there /deepest Hell/.
There purple Vengeance bath'd in Gore retires,
Her Weapons blunted, and extinct her Fires:
There hateful Envy her own Snakes shall feel,
And Persecution mourn her broken Wheel:
There Faction roar, Rebellion bite her Chain.
(Windsor-Forest, ll. 414-421)

Pope's visionary glimpses of Albion's "Golden Days" derive, in their most fundamental aspects, from the Christian hope of a future restored era of peace and justice, a "restoration" which receives its deepest sanction in apocalyptic visions of the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the world, and of the new heaven and earth which He is to bring about at that time. ⁹⁶ And these "Golden Days" of Albion, with their new "Scenes of opening Fate to Light" (l. 426), find their perverse counterpart in the "Saturnian days of Lead and Gold" in the "new scene" of Dulness's triumph in Book IV. For in that latter "scene" we see how, at Dulness's "footstool,"

. . . Science groans in Chains,
And Wit dreads Exile, Penalties and Pains.
There Foam'd rebellious Logic, gagg'd and bound,
There, stript, fair Rhet'ric languish'd on the ground;
His blunted Arms by Sophistry are born,
And shameless Billingsgate her Robes adorn.

(Book IV, ll. 21-26)

Hence Pope's portrait of a new and perverted Golden Age in Book IV of the Dunciad can be seen as an important part of the apocalyptic mutterings heard throughout the poem, for his reference, in the Argument to Book IV, to this new age as a "Kingdom of the Dull upon Earth" strongly echoes apocalyptic ideas of a millennial Kingdom of the Just upon earth. His satiric use of the idea of a millennial kingdom on earth in the Dunciad, moreover, takes on larger and more complex meaning when viewed against the background of his own concept of man's true "restoration" in God's world. For in his arguments in Epistle IV of the Essay on Man on the "Nature and State of Man, with respect to Happiness,"⁹⁷ he made the following significant commentary on the notion of a "kingdom of the Just":

But still this world (so fitted for the knave)
Contents us not. A better shall we have?
A kingdom of the Just then let it be:
But first consider how those Just agree.
The good must merit God's peculiar care;
But who, but God, can tell us who they are?
One thinks on Calvin Heav'n's own spirit fell,
Another deems him instrument of hell;
If Calvin feel Heav'n's blessing, or its rod,
This cries there is, and that, there is no God.
What shocks one part will edify the rest,
Nor with one system can they all be blest.
The very best will variously incline,
And what rewards your Virtue, punish mine.
"Whatever is, is Right"

(IV, ll.131-145)

Pope's view here of the notion of a "kingdom of the Just"
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on earth is in strict accordance with the Essay's entire concern with man's acceptance of the fact that all things in God's world, properly understood, are right--"Whatever is, is Right." And the section in which this view occurs ends with a trenchant commentary on such notions:

Why is not Man a God, and Earth a Heav'n?
Who ask and reason thus, will scarce conceive
God gives enough, while he has more to give:
Immense that pow'r, immense were the demand;
Say, at what part of nature will they stand?
(IV, ll. 162-166)

Pope's treatment of millennial notions in the Essay suggests that his allusion to a Kingdom of the Just in the Dunciad represents something richer than an inversion; that it involves, rather, a crucial part of the Dunciad's concern with a perversion of the whole idea of Christian "restoration." As we have seen, the seventeenth and eighteenth-century development of the earthly millennial concept had, indeed, large implications for the traditional Christian view of man's restoration in God's world. In previous apocalyptic interpretations, the symbolism surrounding the account in Revelation, XX-XXII, of a thousand-year Kingdom of the Just had been commonly interpreted, from the time of Augustine on, as a spiritual
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allegory of the glorified state of the blessed in heaven. In such interpretations, the coming of Anti-Christ signified the continued presence of evil in the world until Christ's Second Coming, when time itself would end, and the saved would be translated to heaven and the damned condemned to

hell. In reinterpreting the reign of the just literally as an actual historical event which was to occur before the end of time, such influential theological figures as Henry More fundamentally reshaped older Christian concepts of man's existence on earth. For More's notion of an inevitable spiritualization of man in time involved a fundamental transformation of traditional Christian humanist views of the possibility of man regaining a semblance of his former state of perfection, through humility and charity, in an ideal society of justice and and peace.

A more radical alteration of the idea of Christian restoration occurred in the works of later scientific millennialists like Burnet, who uniquely fused man's supposedly destined spiritual progress with increasing philosophical-scientific advances. The latter's vision of the "Kingdom of the Just upon earth" as a "restored paradise" could be seen, in the eyes of the Christian humanist, to represent a kind of brave new world of scientific progressivism, a new world which the Dunciad shows threatening to dissolve the Christian hope of the establishment among men of a true moral civitas.

Burnet's progressivist views, as we have also noted, played a key role in the seventeenth and eighteenth-century battle of the ancients and moderns. A central issue in that battle concerned the ends and limits of human learning, an issue which touched upon the more basic

question of man's capabilities and destiny. In his Theory Burnet gave vital support to the moderns' increasing emphasis on mechanical learning over traditional humanistic values by envisioning man's new scientific progress as an integral part of the divine plot of existence. To support his argument in the Theory that "what was made known to the Ancients only by broken Conclusions and Traditions," would "be known (in the later Ages of the World) in a more perfect way, by principles and Theories,"¹⁰⁰ Burnet downgraded the accomplishments of the ancients, particularly the "Romans," who, he said, "made a shew of Learning, but had little in reality, more than Words and Rhetorick."¹⁰¹ Temple's concern, in his "Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning," with Burnet's "panegyric of modern learning"¹⁰² resulted in a lengthy account of the transmission of learning throughout the ages in which Temple stressed the value of moral philosophy over natural philosophy, and suggested that man could retain the capital acquired by civilization only through proper religious humility. Mocking those contemporary scientists who would "fain soar up to the skies" away from the "natures and beings God Almighty gave them," he acidly remarked of the modern: "But, God be thanked, his pride is greater than his ignorance, and what he wants in knowledge, he supplies by sufficiency. . . ."¹⁰³ And Temple followed up this attack on the moderns in 1694 with "Some Thoughts Upon Reviewing the Essay of Ancient and Modern Learning," by stressing

the need for religious humility among the moderns:

But, sure our modern Learned, and especially the divines of that sect among whom it seems this disease /Of presumption/ is spread, and who will have the world "to be ever improving" . . . must themselves have forgotten that humility and charity are the virtues which run through the scope of the Gospel. . . .

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In his discussion of the pattern of progress which appears in the Dunciad, Aubrey Williams has noted how Cibber's vision of the triumphs of Dulness contains an inversion of the traditional concept of translatio studii. Williams has noted in this regard how both Temple and Pope, as adherents of the "ancient" Party, used the concept of an historical and geographical continuity of arts and learning "to counter the tendency of the 'moderns' to deny (at least partly) their own place in a continuous tradition going back to Greece and Rome." ¹⁰⁵ To a humanist like Temple, the presumption of the moderns made them, indeed, appear as present-day "Goths" and "Vandals" bent ¹⁰⁶ on the destruction of the storehouse of past wisdom. Pope's connection of the dunces' perverse progress in Book III with the actions of "Goths and Vandals" assumes real significance in this light, especially when we recall that that progress is later linked in Book IV with the dangers inherent in the moderns' pride in their scientific-philosophical reasoning.

Further connections between the world-makers' theories and the dunces' perverse progress in Book III are conveyed in the book's opening imagery of Cibber asleep on

Dulness's lap. This position, Pope notes in his "Argument" to Book III "causes all the Visions of wild enthusiasts,"¹⁰⁷ and in lines 5-8 he describes the effects of the position:

Then raptures high the seat of Sense o'erflow,
Which only heads refin'd from Reason know,
Hence, from the straw where Bedlam's Prophet nods,
He hears loud Oracles, and talks with Gods.

Pope's image of "Bedlam's Prophet" nodding "from the straw,"¹⁰⁸ has, as James Sutherland observes, an interesting affinity to A Tale of a Tub's image of a Bedlam lunatic lying in the straw of his cell, and Swift's large influence on the Dunciad has been generally acknowledged--¹⁰⁹

Pope's dedicatory addresses to him in the beginning of the poem underscore this influence. The significant relationship which exists between the Dunciad's image of "Bedlam's Prophet" and the Tale's portrait of a Bedlam lunatic in "Straw" in a "Cell" is suggested in Pope's location of Dulness's Empire in Book I in a "Cell" in the "Magnificent College of Bedlam."¹¹⁰ The 1743 Dunciad notes to this image of Dulness's "Cell"--"one Cell there is, conceal'd from vulgar eye" (l. 33)--point out how the

. . . Productions of the students of this private Academy are afterwards described in this first book; as are also their Actions throughout the second; by which it appears how near allied Dulness is to Madness. This naturally prepares us for the subject of the third book, where we find them in union, and acting in conjunction to produce the Catastrophe of the fourth; a mad poetical Sibyl leading our Hero through the Regions of Vision, to animate him in the present undertaking. . . .

In Chapter IX of A Tale of a Tub Swift employed the Bedlam image to satirize "the great Introducers of new Schemes in Philosophy" and, in particular, those who "advance new Systems with such an eager Zeal"; the latter proceeded, Swift observed,

. . . in the common Course of their Words and Actions, by a Method very different from the vulgar Dictates of unrefined Reason; agreeing for the most Part in their several Models, with their present undoubted Successors in the Academy of Modern Bedlam. . . .

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And throughout this chapter in the Tale Swift mocked the "Visions" and "Dreams" of "Modernists," noting how these Visions arose from "Vapours" of "Enthusiasm," and how without such "Vapours" the world would be "deprived of those two great Blessings, Conquests and Systems. . . ." 115

Furthermore, in his Tale Swift associated the moderns' "System"-making with the way in which man's "first Flight of Fancy, commonly transports Him to Idea's of what is most Perfect, finished, and exalted; till having soared out of his own Reach and Sight, . . . With the same Course and Wing, he falls down plum into the lowest Bottom of Things. . . ."; through such "System"-making, Swift further remarked, "Man's Fancy gets astride on his Reason. . . ." 117

and produces entertaining visions, for the

Imagination can build nobler Scenes, and produce more Wonderful Revolutions than Fortune or Nature will be at Expense to furnish.

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Tuveson has noted how Swift's concern with "systems" in A Tale of the Tub was closely related to his earlier

attacks in The Battle of the Books on the world-makers' ¹¹⁹
"System"-making theories; Swift's allusions here to the
mad and fanciful flights of "system-makers" and, more
particularly, to their "nobler Scenes" can be seen to have
special application to the world-makers' speculations. ¹²⁰

Throughout Book III of the Dunciad Cibber's visions
are connected with the "Visions of wild enthusiasts," and
these visions come to the dunce-king as Dulness "curtains
him round with Vapours blue" (l. 3). The image of
"Vapours" here recalls Pope's earlier allusion to "Vapours"
in the following lines from Book II:

A branch of Styx here rises from the Shades,
. . . tinctur'd as it runs with Lethe's streams,
And wafting Vapours from the Land of dreams;
(ll. 338-340)

these "Vapours" from "Lethe's streams" and the "Land of
dreams" allude, as Pope's notes indicate, to a state of
¹²¹
"Stupefaction" and "visionary Madness." And the vehicle
for Cibber's journey in Book III is significantly described
as "Fancy":

And now, on Fancy's easy wing convey'd,
The King descending, views th' Elysian Shade.
(ll. 13-14)

In the following line we see Cibber led by a "slip-shod
Sibyl"; and in his notes, Pope also makes significant
reference to the "religious" "Enthusiasts of all
¹²²
Ages. . . ." The similarity between Swift's attacks on
mad-enthusiastic-fanciful "system-makers" in A Tale of
a Tub and Pope's opening images of Cibber's mad-
enthusiastic-fanciful visions in Book III is strengthened

by the prominent role which "systems" later play in producing the "Catastrophe" of Book IV--the "Catastrophe" is seen ushered in by such philosophical-theological perversions as the "system of Divinity" which "terminates in blind Nature without a Noûs," and by the "puzzled and embroiled Systems" of the "gloomy Clerk" and his followers, who "ramble after Visions" on the "high Priori Road."¹²³

Several notable aspects of the world-makers' speculations also receive satiric attention in the beginning of Book III. Soon after he is transported on "Fancy's easy wing" to the "Elysian Shade," Cibber comes across the souls of the dull in their pre-existent state, and sees them being "dipped" into "Lethe" as they enter the world:

Instant, when dipt, away they wing their flight,
Demand new bodies, and in Calf's array,
Rush to the world, impatient for the day.
(III, ll. 27, 29-30)

Cibber then encounters a "Sage," who proclaims to the new king of the dunces:

Oh born to see what none can see awake!
Behold the wonders of th' oblivious Lake.
Thou, yet unborn, hast touch'd this sacred shore;
The hand of Bavius drench'd thee o'er and o'er.
But blind to former as to future fate,
What mortal knows his pre-existent state?
Who knows how long thy transmigrating soul
Might from Boeotian to Boeotian roll?
(III, ll. 43-50)

Pope's imagery of Cibber's visit to the "Elysian Shade" is naturally a vital part of the poem's mock-epic strategy --here the epic parallel is Aeneas's visit to Hades in

the sixth book of the Aeneid. (Cibber's later vision of the "new world" and Settle's future prophecies continue this parallel to the Aeneid, of course, as well as gaining nourishment from Books XI and XII of Paradise Lost.) While this Cibber-in-the-underworld imagery clearly functions to sustain Pope's mock-epic strategy, the imagery can also be seen to contain further allusiveness to the world-makers' resurrectional theories.

In Chapter II of this study we saw how Burnet adopted More's concept of the soul's pre-existent state, and speculated that at the time of the millennium the soul would be reunited again with its body, but a body that would be a more glorified, ethereal one. In his Archaeologiae Philosophicae Burnet also accommodated Virgil's notion of the Elysian shade to his notion of the millennium by arguing that this "shade" was to be taken in its "large sense" to mean the place where departed souls awaited their embodiment into the new millennial world. Unlike the vast majority of his speculations, Burnet's thoughts on the ultimate fate of the "pre-existent souls" of men were only tentatively stated in the Theory:

We know little here, either of the pre-existence or post-existence of our Souls. . . . Who knows how many turns he shall take upon this stage of the Earth, and how many trials he shall have, before his doom will be finally concluded?

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Cibber's visions in the underworld soon lead to his view of the "scenes" of Dulness's past and present triumphs, and he then receives from Dulness the most gravid of those

raptured visions "which only heads refin'd from Reason know" (III, 1. 6)--as the cloud of Dulness blots out a momentary "ray of Reason" (1. 225), he enjoys his crowning vision of the "nobler scenes" of the conflagration-like destruction of the world and recreation of a "new world" of the "Kingdom of the Dull upon Earth."

The circuit of Cibber's visions in Book III is completed at the end of Book III when Settle describes Cibber's future enthronement:

This, this is he, foretold by ancient rhymes:
Th' Augustus born to bring Saturnian times.
Signs following signs lead on the mighty year!
See! the dull stars roll round and re-appear.
(11. 319-322)

In his Theory Burnet uniquely linked the classical idea of a recreated earth at the time of the Annus Magnus¹²⁷ ("Mighty or Great Year," also called the "Platonic Year") to his own accounts of the future millennial state. Referring to his idea that an alteration in the earth's axis would bring about the new Saturnian age of the millennium, Burnet claimed that "the Revolution call'd The Great Year, is this very Revolution, or the return¹²⁸ of the Earth and Heavens to their first posture"; the new millennial world would thus coincide with the Annus Magnus,¹²⁹ to bring about a "new order of all things." The future "Saturnian times" prophesied by Settle at the end of Book III are to occur, of course, in the "new world" which Cibber had just prophetically seen rise out of the "wide conflagration"--a world in which one "vast Egg

produces human Race" (l. 248). In the 1729 version of the Dunciad, Pope's imagery of the reappearing stars was followed by a series of significant astrological allusions:

She comes! the Cloud-compelling Pow'r, behold!

 As one by one, at dread Medaea's strain;
 The sick'ning Stars fade off th' aethereal plain;
 As Argus' eyes, by Hermes' wand oppress,
 Clos'd one by one to everlasting rest;
 Thus at her felt approach, the secret might,
 Art after Art goes out, and all is Night.
 (III "A", ll. 337, 341-6)

In 1730, in a letter written to a friend, James Thomson significantly connected Pope's description of the "mighty year," and the apocalyptic resonances in the last six lines quoted above, with millennial thinking. Thomson wrote of his present life in London thus:

All is as dull here as wit has never been; and the great platonic year predicted by the Dunciad in the following six fine lines /III, "A", ll. 341-346/, the millennium of dulness seems to be fast approaching.

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Throughout A Tale of a Tub Swift assailed, with devastating irony, the moderns' pompous claims of progress. In his notes to the beginning of Book III, Pope, commenting on the fact that Cibber's "Vision is no more than the Chimera of the Dreamer's brain," notes that this vision is not meant as a "real or intended satire on the Present Age, doubtless more learned, more enlighten'd, and more abounding with great Genius's in Divinity, Politics, and whatever Arts and Sciences, than all the preceding. . . ." ¹³¹
 The role which such "Genius's" of the "Present Age" occupies in the Dunciad is underscored in Pope's commentary on

line 337, "She comes! the Cloud-compelling Pow'r, behold!":

. . . our poet here fortells from what we feel,
what we are to fear; and in the style of other
Prophets, hath used the future tense for the
preterit: since what he says shall be, is already
to be seen, in the writings of some even of our
most adored authors, in Divinity, Philosophy,
Physics, Metaphysics. . . .

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The most essential alliance between Pope's satire in the
Dunciad on the "Present Age" and Swift's satire on the
"moderns" in A Tale of a Tub occurs in both works' por-
trayal of man as a limited creature. In her study of A

Tale of a Tub, Kathleen Williams noted how the theme of
the "power of the human body and impossibility of
escaping its influence" was central to Swift's attack on

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modern system-making. A similar theme permeates Pope's
satire on the world-makers in the Dunciad. In A Tale of
a Tub Swift showed how man's winged flight of "Fancy"
inevitably leads him to fall down plum into the bottom
of things; and in Book II of the Dunciad Pope shows how
the kind of proud dunce, who, in Book I, recognizes his
"Native Place" in the skies, and, who, in Book III, soars
on "Fancy's wing" to dismantle the divine creation,
inevitably falls down into the "brown dishonours" (II,
1. 108) of the ditches of Fleet street. Pope's satiric
attack in the Dunciad on the world-makers' notions of
man's angelic-like powers to transcend his bodily limita-
tions on the world stage thus fundamentally represents
the central Christian humanists' concern with man's failure
to recognize his own imperfections.

By intricately weaving the world-makers' speculations into his vision of the dunces' "new world," Pope linked contemporary scientific progressivist ideas of man's growing perfections with the perverse kind of progress which leads the dunces towards their new mechanistic and ego-centric order. And, near the close of the earlier, three-book versions of the Dunciad, Pope suggested how such tendencies threatened to destroy traditional Christian humanist ideas of man's limitations in God's theatre, and indeed, His "Great Theatre" itself:

Thy hand great Dulness! lets the curtain fall,
And universal Darkness covers All.
(III "A", ll. 355-356)

Notes

1. Lewis Theobald: His Contribution to English Scholarship With Some Unpublished Letters (New York, 1919), p. 124.
2. "Swift and the World-Makers," JHI, XI (1950), 54-74. Majorie Nicolson's Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory also contains a general discussion of Temple's, Swift's and the Scriblerians' attacks on the world-makers, pp. 189-90, 246-49.
3. Cf. R. F. Jones, Ancients and Moderns, pp. 266-7.
4. "An Essay upon Ancient and Modern Learning," The Works of Sir William Temple (London, 1757), vol. III, p. 431.
5. Cf. "Swift and the World-Makers," pp. 69-70.
6. The Miscellaneous Works of the Late Dr. Arbuthnot (Glasgow, 1751), vol. II, p. 215.
7. These works will be discussed in detail later on in this chapter, and in Chapter IV of this study.
8. Cf. Tuveson, "Swift and the World-Makers," p. 71, and Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, pp. 326-8. In an article entitled "Pope and 'The Great Shew of Nature'" (in The Seventeenth Century: Studies in the History of English Thought and Literature from Bacon to Pope, by Richard Foster Jones, et al./Stanford, California, 19517, pp. 306-315), George Sherburn quotes several references in Pope's letters to scientific millennialist works, and argues that "the half-playful passages in his letters concerning the millennium reflect shaping influences on his poetry" (p. 313). Sherburn's central thesis that Pope was "entranced" by the world-makers' millennial thinking is, of course, in my opinion, mistaken. Throughout his article Sherburn places Pope in a peculiarly "dazzled" light, and in his specific discussion of Pope and the world-makers, Sherburn himself points out how Gay, Pope and Arbuthnot satirized the world-makers in Three Hours After

Marriage, and how Pope attacked "the wicked works of Whiston" as early as 1707. Moreover, after discussing the way in which the Dunciad attacks "in general, conjectural theory leading to chaotic confusion. . . , " Sherburn curiously argues that Pope's attitude towards contemporary world-making consisted in both loving and satirizing it for "its conjectural lack of evidence" (p. 314). Sherburn's view of the nature of Pope's millennial thinking will be discussed in more detail further on in this chapter.

9. Aubrey L. Williams, Pope's Dunciad: A Study of Its Meaning (London, 1955), pp. 98-9. My study derives, in large measure, from Williams' work on the Dunciad, particularly his discussion of theatrical imagery in Chapter IV, "A Theatre for Worldlings."
10. Throughout this chapter and the next chapter, all references to the Dunciad, unless otherwise specified, will be to the B ("1743") text of The Dunciad, ed. James Sutherland, The Twickenham Edition of The Poems of Alexander Pope, 3rd ed. (London, New Haven, 1963), vol. V. I will use the cue title Twick Ed. for this edition throughout these chapters.
11. The Correspondence of Alexander Pope, ed. George Sherburn (Oxford, 1956), vol. I, pp. 70-1.
12. Ibid., p. 71.
13. Epistle to Miss Blount, With the Works of Voiture, ll. 21-3, 25-30, in Minor Poems, ed. Norman Ault and John Butt, The Twickenham Edition of The Poems of Alexander Pope (London, New York, 1954) vol. VI, pp. 62-3.
14. Cf. Maynard Mack's note to ll. 6-14, p. 12, in his edition of An Essay on Man, The Twickenham Edition of The Poems of Alexander Pope (London, New Haven, 1950), vol. III, part 1. Much of my discussion of the Essay stems from Mack's introduction to the poem. All quotations from An Essay on Man are taken from this edition.
15. Ibid., p. lxxix.
16. Ibid., p. lviii.
17. See "Argument" to An Essay on Man, Epistle II, p. 52.
18. Cf. note to l. 288, Epistle II, p. 89.
19. The Praise of Folly, trans. Hoyt Hopewell Hudson (Princeton, 1944), p. 63.

20. Ibid., p. 38.
21. See "Martinus Scriblerus, Of the Poem," Twick. Ed., p. 50.
22. Cf. Pope's Dunciad: A Study of Its Meaning, pp. 101-2.
23. See "Argument" to An Essay on Man, Epistle I, p. 19.
24. Twick. Ed., pp. 89-90.
25. The Spectator, 10th ed. (London, 1729), vol. V, p. 264.
26. The Guardian (London, 1751), vol. II, p. 89.
27. (Oxford, 1936), pp. 136-140.
28. Ibid., p. 137.
29. Ibid., p. 138.
30. See "Argument" to Book IV, Twick. Ed., p. 337.
31. Twick. Ed., p. 56.
32. Cf. George Sherburn, "Pope and the 'Great Shew of Nature'," p. 311.
33. In his translation of Burnet's Of the State of the Dead, and of those who are to rise (London, 1728), Mathias Earberry claimed that Burnet's "Way of Thinking was rather Theatrical than Theological" (p. 130). Addison also alluded to this theatrical quality in Burnet's thinking in the last stanza of An Ode to the Learned Dr. Thomas Burnet, trans. Thomas Newcombe, in The Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison, ed. Richard Hurd (London, 1883), vol. VI: "What scenes thy /Burnet's/ thoughtful breast employ; / Capacious as that mighty frame, / You raise with ease, and with ease destroy" (p. 585, ll. 80-2).
34. Theory, Book I, p. 2.
35. Ibid., "Preface."
36. Ibid., Book I, p. 2.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., Book I, pp. 22, 47.

39. In his Dissertation sur les changemens arrivés dans notre globe, et sur les pétrifications qu'on prétend en être encore les témoignages (1729), The Changes that Have Happened in our Globe, trans. William F. Fleming (The Works of Voltaire, ed. John Morley /London, Paris, 1901/, vol. XXXIX), Voltaire significantly remarked of Burnet's, Whiston's and Woodward's notions of shifting scenes on the cosmic stage that the world-makers seemed "as fond of a change of scene in the universe, as the common people of those on the stage" (p. 284).
40. Theory, Book I, p. 62.
41. The Prose Works of Alexander Pope: Volume I, The Earlier Works, 1711-20, pp. 269-70.
42. A True and Faithful Narrative of What passed in London, during the General Consternation of all Ranks and Degrees of Mankind on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday Last, Swift-Pope Miscellanies in Prose and Verse (London, 1732), "Third Volume," pp. 257, 273. This pamphlet has been generally ascribed to Swift, but in a recent article entitled, "'That on Whiston,' by John Gay" (Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, 56, First Quarter /1962/ 73-8), James M. Osborn shows that Pope actually credited the work to Gay.
43. Gulliver's Travels 1726, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford, 1959), p. 164. Cf. Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, p. 249.
44. Edna Leake Steeves, The Art of Sinking in Poetry: Martinus Scriblerus' Peri Bathous (New York, 1952), p. 85. In her introduction Miss Steeves points out (p. xlii) that Pope was "in the responsibilities and final authority of authorship, for the greater part of Peri Bathous the actual author." Miss Steeves also notes (pp. xliii-xliv) the close relationship which exists between Peri Bathous, the Dunciad and other Scriblerian pamphlets in satirizing contemporary "misapplied learning."
45. Ibid., p. 189.
46. The image of a "sable Sorc'rer" in line 233 preceding these apocalyptic images slyly conveys the suggestion of forbidden knowledge, for the latter, as the 1729 notes tell us, represents "Dr. Faustus" (Twick. Ed., p. 176).

47. So popular was that account that Addison saw fit to versify several details of it in his An Ode to the Learned Dr. Thomas Burnet: "As nature's doom you / Burnet/ thus impart, / The dreadful scene we scarce endure / / The burning storm, the liquid fire; / Where worlds and men consuming lie, / And in one blaze of ruin die" (p. 584, ll. 43-4, 58-61). In her Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory Miss Nicolson has shown how scores of early eighteenth-century poets also utilized "Burnet's graphic and realistic pictures of a world on fire" (p. 232).
48. Theory, Book III, p. 57.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid., p. 41.
51. Ibid., p. 73.
52. Ibid., pp. 69-70.
53. Ibid., p. 66.
54. Ibid., p. 69.
55. A New Theory of the Earth, 6th ed. (London, 1755), Book I, p. 40.
56. Cf. Richard Bentley, The Folly and Unreasonableness of Atheism Demonstrated from the Origin and Frame of the World (London, 1693), Part 3, pp. 22ff.; and James Keill, An Examination of Dr. Burnet's Theory of the Earth: With Some Remarks on Mr. Whiston's New Theory of the Earth (1698), 2nd ed. (London, 1734), pp. 52-70. Like many other seventeenth and eighteenth-century "poets," Richard Blackmore, the "father of the Bathous" as Pope dubbed him in Peri Bathous (Chapter IX), utilized Burnet's account of the Conflagration to describe nature's upheavals. In his Prince Arthur: A Heroick Poem in Ten Books (London, 1695), Book I, Blackmore significantly connected the world-makers' descriptions of polar changes during the conflagration with the restoration of Chaos and Night:

"The Dire Convulsions, for a certain Space
 Distorted Nature, wresting from its Place
 This Globe, set to the Sun's more oblique View,
 And wrench'd the Poles some Leagues yet more askew.
 Horrour, Confusion, Uproar, Strife and Fear,
 In all their wild amazing Shapes appear.
 Meantime Old Chaos joyful at the Sight,
 Look'd, and smil'd horrible on older Night."
 (p. 9, ll. 263-270)

57. Gulliver's Travels, ed. Herbert Davis, p. 210.
58. The Covent-Garden Journal, ed. Gerard Edward Jensen (New Haven, Conn., 1915), vol. II, p. 134.
59. Archaeologiae Philosophicae, p. 72.
60. See note to l. 240, Twick. Ed., p. 177.
61. Three Hours After Marriage by John Gay, Alexander Pope and John Arbuthnot, with the Confederates and the Two Keys, ed. Richard Morton and William M. Peterson (Painesville, Ohio, 1961), p. 8.
62. Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, p. 248. Cf. Addison's description of Burnet's "Deluge" in An Ode to the Learned Dr. Thomas Burnet: "How shines each fancy! with what heat / Does every glowing page surprise! / While spouting oceans upward flow . . ." (p. 584, ll. 39-41).
63. For Woodward as "Fossile," see Morton's and Peterson's "Introduction" to Three Hours After Marriage, pp. iii-v. While Three Hours After Marriage is generally acknowledged to be a joint collaboration of Gay, Pope and Arbuthnot, Pope's part in the play has received much attention lately. In "The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Three Hours After Marriage," MP, XXIV (1926-7), 100, Sherburn emphasizes the fact that a contemporary critic of the play, Joseph Gay / John Durant Breval, in his The Confederates: a Farce (1717), gave "Pope a major responsibility for the piece." For another opinion of Pope's large part in creating the Three Hours, cf. Leslie Beattie, John Arbuthnot, Mathematician and Satirist (Cambridge, 1935), p. 230.
64. Three Hours After Marriage, p. 14.
65. P. 71, footnote 53. Cf. also Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, pp. 248-9. In their "Introduction" to Three Hours After Marriage (p. xii), Morton and Peterson attribute "Clinket's play about the Deluge" to Pope.
66. Three Hours After Marriage, p. 19.
67. ". . . Thou from the first / Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread / Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss / And mad'st it pregnant. . . ." Paradise Lost, Book I, ll. 19-22, in John Milton, Paradise Lost, A Poem in Twelve Books, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York, 1962), p. 2.

68. p. 201.
69. Cf. Katharine Brownell Collier, Cosmogonies of Our Fathers: Some Theories of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (New York, 1934), pp. 72ff.
70. Theory, Book II, p. 184.
71. Ibid., p. 185.
72. A Summary of Material Heads Which May be Enlarged and Improved Into a Complete Answer to Dr. Burnet's Theory of the Earth (London, 1696), pp. 23, 25.
73. The Abyssinian Philosophy Confuted: or Telluris Theoria, Neither Sacred, nor Agreeable to Reason (London, 1697), "Preface."
74. Letters on Various Subjects, Literary, Political and Ecclesiastical, to and from William Nicolson DD (London, 1809), vol. I, p. 104. For further references to Burnet's "Egg" theory, cf. James Keill, An Examination of Dr. Burnet's Theory of the Earth With Some Remarks on Mr. Whiston's New Theory of the Earth, 2nd ed. (London, 1734), pp. 83-114.
75. The Description of Bath, 3rd ed. (London, 1736), p. 7, ll. 94-101. All quotations from The Description of Bath will be taken from this edition. For other poetic allusions to Burnet's egg-world, cf. Moses Browne, An Essay on the Universe in Poems on Various Subjects (London, 1739), p. 307; James Kirkpatrick, The Sea-Piece (London, 1750), p. 17; and Richard Jago, Edge-Hill (The Works of the English Poets, ed. Alexander Chalmers /London, 1810/, vol. XVIII, p. 288). In her Richard Jago: A Study of Eighteenth-Century Localism (Philadelphia, 1945), Ilse Dusoir Lind notes how Burnet's views of the earth's shape so retained its hold in literary and scientific circles that "Jago, over 50 years later, felt compelled to refute Burnet's interpretation and offer a theory of his own" (p. 81).
76. In the third chapter, "The Golden Age," of his The Background of Thomson's Seasons (Hamden, Conn., 1961), pp. 97-102, Alan Dugald McKillop notes the popularity Burnet's "Golden Age" accounts enjoyed in the early eighteenth century, particularly with such figures as David Mallet and James Thomson. Cf. also Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, pp. 225-232, 336-341.
77. Theory, Book II, p. 119.

78. Ibid., p. 121.
79. In the 1729 Dunciad Pope described (I, ll. 107-8, Twick. Ed., p. 76) Dulness's "momentary monsters" in several lines, "See Gods with Daemons in strange league ingage, / And earth and heav'n, and hell her battle wage," which bear a close resemblance to Cibber's vision, in Book III (ll. 237-8), of how "Hell rises, Heav'n descends, and dance on Earth" / Gods, imps, and monsters, music, rage, and mirth."
80. See note to Book I "A", l. 55, Twick. Ed., p. 67.
81. Archaeologiae Philosophicae, p. 15. In Book I of his Theory Burnet spoke of the "warmth and influence from the Sun" working on what he called the "vital Seeds" of creation: "Now this Principle /sun's warmth7, howsoever convey'd to those rudiments of life which we call Eggs, is that which gives the first stroke towards Animation; and this seems to be exciting a ferment in those little masses whereby the parts are loosen'd, and dispos'd for that formation which is to follow afterwards" (pp. 135-6).
82. The Folly and Unreasonableness of Atheism, Part 3, pp. 3lff. Cf. James Keill, An Examination of Dr. Burnet's Theory of the Earth, pp. 70ff., for a similar attack.
83. Physico-Theology: or a Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God From his Works of Creation (Edinburgh, 1773), pp. 74-5.
84. Theory, Book II, p. 122.
85. Ibid., p. 136.
86. Ibid., p. 170.
87. The Poetical Career of Alexander Pope (Princeton, London, 1938), p. 153.
88. See "Martinus Scriblerus, Of the Poem," Twick. Ed., p. 51.
89. Note to l. 4, Book IV, Twick. Ed., p. 339.
90. Note to l. 15, Book I, Twick. Ed., p. 270.
91. "'The Shadowy Cave': Some Speculations on a Twickenham Grotto," in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature: Essays in Honor of Alan Dugald McKillop, ed. Carroll Camden (Chicago, 1963), p. 70.

92. Ibid., p. 69.
93. Cf. "Argument" to Book IV, Twick. Ed., p. 338.
94. Cf. "Introduction" to An Essay on Criticism, in Pastoral Poetry and An Essay on Criticism, ed. E. Audra and Aubrey Williams, in The Twickenham Edition of The Poems of Alexander Pope (London, New Haven, 1961), vol. I, pp. 224-232. All quotations from An Essay on Criticism will be taken from this edition.
95. Cf. "Introduction" to An Essay on Man, in which Maynard Mack notes that "the theme of restoration is explicit in the very structure of Pope's poem," and shows how in the four epistles man gradually progresses from a state of irreligious pride towards restoration with divine order (p. lxi).
96. Cf. "Introduction" to Windsor-Forest in Pastoral Poetry and An Essay on Criticism (pp. 143-4), where the editors note how the "Golden Days" in Windsor-Forest are linked to Pope's earlier adaptation, in the Messiah, of Isaiah's prophecies of the advent of Christ on earth. All quotations from Windsor-Forest will be taken from this edition.
97. See "Argument" to An Essay on Man, Epistle IV, p. 127.
98. In his "Pope and 'The Great Shew' of Nature," Sherburn argues that "Pope's most significant application of his millennial thinking to poetry is negative--is the millennium transversed" (p. 313). That this is a somewhat inadequate view is suggested by Sherburn's own remarks on the Essay on Man: "The Essay on Man should have ended with some epic view of a blissful condition; but it does not--perhaps because that would have involved Pope in Scriptural imagery. . . . But in his account in Epistle III of the poem, where the great drama of human development is unfolded from the Golden Age . . . we might expect a climactic conclusion with the millennium at least glimpsed. We do not get it" (p. 313). A central error in Sherburn's article lies, I feel, in his failure to distinguish between the world-makers' millennial doctrines and another contemporary apocalyptic view which Sherburn couples with the world-makers in his arguments--George Berkeley's notion of a new Golden Age in the Bermudas. Berkeley's "Bermuda project" (1722-8) was a favorite subject of conversation among his Scriblerian friends, and though his zeal instigated much bantering among the Scriblerians, his goal for "reforming" the

"Americas" was universally acclaimed by them. (Cf. William Henry Irving, John Gay: Favorite of the Wits /Durham, No. Car., 1940/, p. 99.) In his letters Pope referred, often quite facetiously, to the Bermuda scheme, but there is little doubt that he shared, at least temporarily, Berkeley's enthusiasm for restoring the "New Jerusalem" in the Americas. (Cf. especially his letter to Robert Digby, October 10, 1725, in The Correspondence of Alexander Pope, vol. II, pp. 329-330.) The basis of Berkeley's notion of a "restored" Paradise in America is worth close scrutiny if we are to understand its relationship to the seventeenth and eighteenth-century scientific millennial myth of the world-makers. The theme of Berkeley's "Newport Sermons," which he delivered in Newport, Rhode Island, as part of his project, was based entirely on the need in the "lapsed state of mankind" for charity. (Cf. John Wild, George Berkeley: A Study of His Life and Philosophy /Cambridge, Mass., 1936/, pp. 322ff.) In these sermons, Berkeley also emphasized the inadequacy and limitations of reason, and the folly of seeking salvation through a system of evolution or revolution of man's moral nature. Berkeley's apocalyptic hopes were, in fact, in total opposition to the approach of the Cambridge Platonists, for as Wild has pointed out (p. 75), the whole Cambridge Platonist view of man involved, in Berkeley's view, a "heresy of self-salvation."

99. Cf. Tuveson, Millennium and Utopia, pp. 16-17. Tuveson points out that the figure of 1,000 years was considered in such interpretations to be a symbol for eternity.
100. Theory, Book II, p. 195.
101. Ibid., Book III, p. 10.
102. In his essay, "The Background of 'the Battle of the Books'," in The Seventeenth Century, p. 22, R. F. Jones points out that the content of Temple's Essay "bears mostly upon the material presented" in Burnet's Theory.
103. "Essay" in The Works of Sir William Temple (London, 1757), vol. III, pp. 459-460.
104. The Works of Sir William Temple, vol. III, p. 501.

105. Pope's Dunciad, p. 45. Cf. ll. 684ff. of An Essay on Criticism where Pope uses the translatio studii concept (see "Introduction" to Pastoral Poetry, pp. 231-2) to underline the need for humility among his contemporaries, and to affirm the ancients as a standard of past perfection.
106. In the beginning of his "Some Thoughts," Temple compared the moderns' insolent treatment of the ancients to the actions of "some young barbarous Goths or Vandals breaking or defacing the admirable statues of those ancient heroes of Greece or Rome which had so long preserved their memories honoured, and almost adored, for so many generations" (The Works of Sir William Temple, vol. III, pp. 471-2).
107. See "Argument" to Book III, Twick. Ed., p. 319.
108. See note to Book III, l. 7, Twick. Ed., p. 150.
109. Cf. Sutherland, "Introduction" to the Dunciad, pp. xiii-xv. The Dunciad, Sutherland observes "was rapidly taking shape in the summer of 1727, and no doubt Swift, who was always fond of throwing out hints for others to develop, was kept well informed of the progress being made, and contributed some suggestions which Pope was glad to improve" (p. xv). On October 9, 1729, Pope wrote to Swift of his purpose in the poem: "It was my principal aim in the entire work to perpetuate the friendship between us, to shew that the friends or the enemies of one were the friends or enemies of the other. . . ." (The Correspondence of Alexander Pope, vol. III, p. 57).
110. See A Tale of a Tub, in A Tale of a Tub, To Which is added, The Battle of the Books and The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit, ed. A. C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1958), pp. 162ff.
111. Note to Book III, l. 33, Twick. Ed., p. 271.
112. Ibid.
113. A Tale of a Tub, p. 166.
114. Ibid.
115. Ibid., p. 169.
116. Ibid., pp. 157-8. In her Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise (Lawrence, Kansas, 1958), Kathleen Williams notes how Swift's imagery of Fancy's "Flight"

refers to the speculations of system-makers, who are pictured caught up in "second causes and mathematical systems" (p. 144).

117. A Tale of a Tub, p. 171.
118. Ibid., 172.
119. "Swift and the World-Makers," p. 69. In his article Tuveson shows how "system-making" and "world-making" were interchangeable terms during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A few years before the publication of A Tale of A Tub Arbuthnot had rebuked the world-makers by concluding his Examination of Dr. Woodward's Account of the Deluge with the desire that "People were more diligent in observing, and more cautious in System-making" (The Miscellaneous Works of the Late Dr. Arbuthnot /Glasgow, 1751/, vol. II, p. 234).
120. In his Theory Burnet claimed that "to be inquisitive into the ways of Providence" was one of the "greatest perfections" of man and argued that to cultivate this perfection "we must suffer the Soul to be some times upon the Wing, and raise her self above the sight of this little dark Point, which we now inhabit" (Book III, pp. 86-7). During the late seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth century Burnet's "winged" speculations were constantly attacked as the products of "mad" and "enthusiastic fancy." For example, in his Some Animadversions Upon a Book, Intituled the Theory of the Earth (London, 1685), "Preface," Bishop Croft described Burnet's Theory as a kind of "grave and sober madness" in which Burnet "fancies" he sees in Nature "much more than really there is"; in The Abyssinian Philosophy Confuted (London, 1697), "To the Reader," Robert St. Clair also chided Burnet for his "Prophane Fancies," and the world-makers in general for their tendency to describe a "World of their own Fancying, instead one of God's making"; and the following year James Keill, in his An Examination of Dr. Burnet's Theory of the Earth (1698), p. 4, scoffed at the ridiculous "fancies" of Burnet's Theory. In his Will-with-a-Wisp (London, 1714), an author calling himself Simon Scriblerus, described Whiston's idea of the Deluge as an "airy and illustr'ous Flight" of an "extravagant Fancy" (p. 59), and ridiculed Whiston for publishing his "whimsical Vapours" and "scattering his Delusions abroad . . . by his false Spirit of Enthusiasm" (p.3), and in his Whistoneutes (London, 1731), Simon Scriblerus attacked Whiston's "Systems," which, he said, "proceed from . . . mere Whimsies and Fancies" (p. 6).

In a work attributed to Arbuthnot and published in his Miscellaneous Works, vol. II, pp. 103-110, entitled A Letter to the Students of Both Universities, the world-makers' theories were ridiculed in imagery redolent of Swift's imagery in A Tale of A Tub. The Letter relates how, when "the Fancy" is loosened from Reason, it seeks "to hunt, for Instance, after Comets, and catch them by the Tail; to reform the Architecture of the World; and make the Creation look a little more Mathematical" (p. 108); and in another section it notes how, "if the Vapours /of Madness/ create a Rotation of Intellects, it will produce a deal of Speculation upon Circles, and the Squaring of the Comets, the Courses of Heavenly Bodies, Vortex's, the Longitude, the perpetual Motion, new Worlds, and Systems of the Universe" (p. 109).

121. Note to Book II "A", l. 314, Twick. Ed., p. 140.
122. Note to Book III, l. 15, Twick. Ed., p. 320.
123. See notes in Book IV to l. 244 (p. 367), l. 459 (p. 385), and l. 471 (p. 386), Twick. Ed. The relationship of Pope's references to "systems" and the world-makers' "systems" will be examined in detail in the next chapter of this study.
124. Cf. Theory, Book IV, pp. 141, 147. Pope's references to the "dipping" of the souls of the dull, and to a "vital spring" in l. 55, suggest that he was familiar with More's descriptions, in his Prae-existency of the Soul, of myriads of pre-existent souls waiting for their entrance into the world.
125. Archaeologiae Philosophicae, p. 124.
126. Theory, Book IV, pp. 144-5.
127. In The Age of the World: Moses to Darwin, Francis C. Haber provides a succinct explanation of this notion: "A system that became popular in Greece and Rome was the Great Year, which included a Great Winter when the cosmos underwent inundation and a Great Summer when it dried up and finally passed through a fiery conflagration. . . . Plato referred to a "Complete Year" where all the eight orbits of the heavenly bodies finished their revolutions together, and the "Platonic Year," also called the magnus annus, passed into medieval thought as a period of 36,000 years" (p. 14).
128. Theory, Book III, p. 146.

129. Ibid., p. 9.
130. To "Mr. Munbee," October 27, 1730, published in Alan Dugald McKillop's The Background of Thomson's Seasons, pp. 177-8. Thomson's remarks provide evidence that contemporary readers of the poem recognized the numerous, subtle, and, certainly at times covert, allusions to millennial thinking in the imagery of the 1729 edition of the Dunciad. The relationship of Pope's apocalyptic imagery to the world-makers' apocalyptic prophecies will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.
131. Note to Book III "A", ll. 5-6, Twick. Ed., p. 150.
132. Note to Book III "A", l. 337, Twick. Ed., p. 192.
133. Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise, pp. 139ff.

Four: The Curtain Falls on the Divine Stage

In 1742 Pope added a new book, the fourth, to the Dunciad which showed the fulfillment of his prophecy of a future "scene" in which the sons of Dulness would "preside in the seats of arts and sciences."¹ The addition of Book IV to the poem has caused some critics of the Dunciad to question its unity, primarily on the basis of an apparent disparity of tone and purpose between this last book and the first three. Ian Jack, for example, feels that there is a "fundamental uncertainty about the subject of the poem, a fatal indefiniteness of purpose,"² in the final version of the Dunciad (1743), since the "last Book has a wide scope and a serious moral purpose," while "the first three Books are primarily concerned with Dulness in literature and are largely retaliatory in intention."³ Arguing that "a 'Burlesque Heroick on Writers, & ye modern Diversions of the Town'⁴ could not be changed into a comprehensive Satire on the Age," Jack quotes with approval Joseph Warton's earlier verdict of the poem as "a marvellous mixture and jumble of images and sentiments, Pantomime and Philosophy. . . ."⁵ But in using theatrical imagery in the first three books of the Dunciad, Pope molded, as we have seen, his "Burlesque

Heroick on Writers & ye modern Diversions of the Town" into a comprehensive satire by linking pantomimic "creations" with the world-makers' philosophical "creations." And the serious moral purpose and values contained in his use of theatrical imagery is reinforced throughout Book IV to produce a rich and unified satire on the scientific progressivist tendencies of his day.

In the first three books of the Dunciad, Pope made the anarchic world of the pantomimic stage vibrate with the anarchy of man's pride in the larger world of eighteenth-century London. Throughout Book III of his poem he closely associated this anarchy with various scientific, philosophical, and theological perversions in his own time. Thus, in the fifty lines or so which precede Cibber's vision of the "new world," the reader is given a survey of the present progress of Dulness and he is exposed to such contemporary triumphs as the way in which

. . . each Science lifts its modern type,
Hist'ry her Pot, Divinity his Pipe,
While proud Philosophy repines to show,
Dishonest sight! his breeches rent below;
Imbrow'd with native bronze, lo! Henley stands;
(III, ll. 195-199)

and more particularly, he is shown the way in which a charlatan-preacher like John Henley is able, "in Toland's, Tindal's and in Woolston's days" (l. 212), to "murder, hack and mawl" "meek modern faith" (l. 210). After these glances at the contemporary debasement of history and philosophy, and the deistic mutilation of faith, Elkanah

Settle prepares Cibber for his climactic vision of Dulness's future reign with the following admonition:

'Tis yours, a Bacon or a Locke to blame,
A Newton's genius, or a Milton's flame:
But oh! with One, immortal one dispense,
The source of Newton's Light, of Bacon's Sense!
Content, each Emanation of his fires
That beams on earth, each Virtue he inspires,
Each Art he prompts, each Charm he can create,
What'er he gives, are giv'n for you to hate.
Persist, by all divine in Man unaw'd,
But "Learn, Ye Dunces! not to scorn your God."
(11. 215-224)

In her Newton Demands the Muse: Newton's Opticks and the Eighteenth-Century Poets, Miss Nicolson has noted how in these lines and in Cibber's entire vision of the future, Pope suggested

that if intellectual England continued as it bade fair to do, the sons of "Dulness" (we should remember his interpretation of the word, which implied not that his contemporaries knew too little, but that they prided themselves on knowing too much) would preside over all Arts and Sciences, and, self-conscious of their powers in discovering the secrets of nature and the mysteries of Deity, would come to worship man rather than God.

6

The excesses to which "proud Science"⁷ were tending in Pope's day is, of course, central to his depiction of the new reign which Dulness establishes in Book IV of the Dunciad. Indeed, the most sinister embodiment of the dunces' presumption in the entire poem is doubtless found in the scientific-metaphysical theorizing of the "gloomy Clerk." The latter, prompted by his Goddess, the "Mother of Arrogance and Source of Pride" (l. 270), is too disdainful to be led to "Nature's Cause thro' Nature. . . ."

(l. 468), and takes, instead, the "high Priori Road" of speculation to reason God out of the world altogether. Pope's indictment of this type of theorizing is clearly related to An Essay on Man's concern with the dangerous extremes of contemporary scientific pride. In the Essay Pope showed how man, properly orientated to divine order through a humble self-knowledge of his place in creation, could look "Thro' Nature, up to Nature's God" (Epistle IV, l. 332); in Book IV of the Dunciad he shows man self-orientated through pride, creating a moral and social realm in which divine order is supplanted by a new mechanistic and egocentric order. Pope's distrust of the dangers of contemporary scientific-philosophical reasoning in the Dunciad is related, in a crucial way, to his use of theatrical imagery throughout the poem to satirize the world-makers.

8

The "actors" of Pope's Dunciad go through "their grossly comic charade," as J. S. Cunningham puts it, "on a stage which reverberates with mutilated hints, distorted echoes, of very 'considerable' things. . . ." ⁹ As we have seen, in Book III Pope utilizes Cibber's theatrical vision of Dulness's "new world" to symbolize a new stage setting in the "great theatre" of the world, a future scene in which the throne of Dulness will be triumphantly advanced over the cosmic as well as the human theatre. And in Book IV he shows how the dunces' pride finally brings their mother to the "busy scene where she mounts the throne

in triumph"¹⁰--a new perverse "scene" on the cosmic stage
in which all its "players" are assigned their new
"uncreating" roles by Dulness:

. "Go Children of my care!
To Practice now from Theory repair.
All my commands are easy, short, and full:
My Sons! be proud, be selfish, and be dull."
(11. 579-582) 11

Dulness's followers have thus persisted, by "all divine
in Man unaw'd," in so ignoring divine direction that they
now "doubt of God" (l. 472), and seek to

Make Nature still incroach upon his plan;
And shove him off as far as e'er we can.
(11. 473-474)

The very "considerable" things reverberating on
Pope's stage in the Dunciad concern, then, nothing less
than the displacement of the theocentric theatrum mundi
by a novel egocentric theatrum mundi of folly and pride.
Pope's description of this new scene as the "Kingdom of
the Dull upon Earth" suggests, furthermore, his purpose
of interweaving the world-makers' theories with the
"whole history of Dulness and her children"¹² in the entire
poem. The world-makers' notion of a new millennial king-
dom on the cosmic stage was, as we have seen, vitally
linked to the eighteenth-century scientific ethos of man's
growing powers to unriddle all of Nature's secrets or laws;
throughout the fourth book Pope connects the dunces' new,
perverse order with the world-makers' concepts of man's
inevitable moral and social progress on God's stage. The
remainder of this chapter will show how the new "scene"

in Book IV is an integral part of the poem's use of theatrical imagery to represent the forces at work transforming a theocentric universe into a new world of scientific progressivism.

In the beginning of Book IV Pope pictures Dulness preparing "to mold" her "new World" (l. 15), and in his notes he comments on his description of this "new World" thus:

. . . a new World⁷ In allusion to the Epicurean opinion, that from the Dissolution of the natural World into Night and Chaos, a new one should arise; this the Poet alluding to, in the Production of a new moral World, makes it partake of its original Principles.

13

Pope's connection here of the formation of Dulness's new world with an "Epicurean opinion" is an important one, for later on in the fourth book, the gloomy Clerk, boasting how his kind of a priori rationalizing will thrust "some Mechanic Cause" (l. 475) into God's place, begs Dulness:

Oh hide the God still more! and make us see
Such as Lucretius drew, a God like Thee:
Wrapt up in Self, a God without a Thought.
(ll. 483-485)

And, immediately after the Clerk's speech, it is Silenus,¹⁴
"an Epicurean Philosopher,"¹⁵ who, shaking "out of his Pipe
the seeds of Fire" (l. 494), proclaims to the Goddess how,
"From Priest-craft happily set free. . . / every finish'd
Son returns to thee" (ll. 499-500).

Pope's allusion in Book IV to the "new World" as Epicurean takes on real significance against the background of his attacks on the world-makers throughout the first three books of the poem. For in the extensive seventeenth and eighteenth-century controversy over the world-makers, the most prominent charge leveled against their speculations was that they represented a revival of the atomistic theories of the Epicureans.¹⁶ Thus, in one of the first of such attacks, Some Animadversions Upon a Book, Intituled The Theory of the Earth (1685), Bishop Herbert Croft argued that Burnet's mechanical view of nature "savours very much of the Epicurean Opinion, who /sic/ thought it below the Dignity of the Godhead to trouble itself with the minute Affairs of this lower world."¹⁷ In his Examination of Dr. Burnet's Theory (1698), James Keill, noting how Burnet had formed the earth from the "sole necessary principles of Mechanism," also wondered how Burnet's "opinion differs from the Epicurean,"¹⁸ and Thomas Baker, in his Reflections on Learning (1700), saw Burnet's and Whiston's hypotheses derived from the "ancient Opinions" of "Democritus and Epicurus, the Founders of the Atomical or Corpuscular Philosophy."¹⁹ The world-makers' scientific explanations were also attacked as Epicurean in origin by John Ray in The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creation (1691), by Richard Bentley in The Folly and Unreasonableness of Atheism (1693), and by Bevil Higgons in A Poem on Nature (1736).²⁰ Nor was this

"Epicureanism" in the world-makers' views overlooked in the Scriblerian campaign against false learning: in the Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works, and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus (which was edited and published by Pope in 1741), the world-makers' mechanistic theorizing was satirized, as Tuveson and Nicolson have shown, in Scriblerus's new "Mechanical Explication of the Formation of the Universe, according to the Epicurean Hypothesis."²¹

A cardinal part of the world-makers' "Epicurean opinions" was directed, of course, at showing how the "Dissolution" of the world in the Conflagration would result in the production of the new "natural" and "moral" world of the millennium.²² Furthermore, in his Theory

Burnet speculated that the "dark Womb" of the chaos following the Conflagration would contain the "seeds and rudiments"²³ of this new world, and that in this new world the elements would "be cast into a better mould" so that the "Form and Qualities of the earth" would become

"Paradisaical."²⁴ In lines 13-16 of Book IV Pope describes the Epicurean-like formation of Dulness's new world thus:

Then rose the Seed of Chaos, and of Night,
To blot out Order, and extinguish Light,
Of dull and venal a new World to mold,
And bring Saturnian days of Lead and Gold.

Lines 11-12 place the "molding" of Dulness's new world from the "Seed of Chaos" in a significant astronomical context:

Sick was the Sun, the Owl forsook his bow'r,
The moon-struck Prophet felt the madding hour;

and the following note is supplied for these lines:

The Poet introduceth this, (as all great events
are supposed by sage Historians to be preceded)
by an Eclipse of the Sun. . . .

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This reference to an Eclipse of the Sun preceding the
"great event" of the "new world" assumes large satiric
meaning here, for the world-makers' astrological-millennial
prophecies, particularly Whiston's, brought immense²⁶
interest in such phenomena as eclipses as signs of the
new millennial world. Throughout the early eighteenth
century Whiston published numerous scientific-apocalyptic²⁷
accounts of eclipses, "surprising meteors" and comets;
and these accounts, as we have seen, received rich satiric
treatment in both Swift's Gulliver's Travels and Gay's
A True and Faithful Narrative of What Passed in London.

Pope's familiarity with, and his attitude toward
Whiston's "scientific" descriptions can be gauged from
the following letter which he and Gay jointly composed
to a friend in 1715:

Mr. Pope owes all his skill in astronomy (and
particularly to the revolution of eclipses) to
him /John Tidcombe/, and Mr. Whiston, so cele-
brated of late for his discovery of the longi-
tude in an extraordinary copy of verses (which
you heard when we were last in town).

28

The "extraordinary copy of verses" referred to in this
letter was the Scriblerian "Ode, for Musick, on the
Longitude," a scatological ridicule of Whiston's recent²⁹
scheme for discovering the longitude. Earlier in his

career, in his An Epistle to Henry Cromwell, Esq. (1707), Pope took satiric note of Whiston's alleged Socinian views, and warned his friend: "Sir, you're so stiff in your Opinion, / I wish you do not turn Socinian."³⁰ And in 1716, in his God's Revenge against Punning, Pope attacked Whiston again by coupling "Whistonism" and "Socinianism," and by ridiculing Whiston's apocalyptic prophecies by alluding to a "dreadful conflagration," one of whose signs would³¹ be an "unparallel'd Eclipse" (italics mine).

The connection between the world-makers' speculations and Dulness's new world is strengthened in Pope's account, near the end of Book IV, of the approach of the new world. In lines 627-630 he envisions Dulness's restoration of Night and Chaos thus:

In vain, in vain,--the all-composing Hour
Resistless falls: The Muse obeys the Pow'r.
She comes! she comes! the sable Throne behold
Of Night Primaeval, and of Chaos old!

The "madding hour" the "moon-struck Prophet" felt at the beginning of Book IV now falls resistless, ushered in against a series of astrological-apocalyptic images of falling meteors and "sick'ning stars":

The Meteor drops, and in a flash expires.
As one by one, at dread Medea's strain,
The sick'ning stars fade off th' ethereal plain;
(ll. 634-636)

and the following passage then pictures the awesome effects of Dulness's arrival:

See Skulking Truth to her old Cavern fled,
Mountains of Casuistry heap'd o'er her head!
Philosophy, that lean'd on Heav'n before,

Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
Physic of Metaphysic begs defence,
And Metaphysic calls for aid on Sense!
See Mystery to Mathematics fly!

(IV, 11. 641-647)

In the 1743 notes to line 647, "See Mystery to Mathematics fly," significant reference is made to the way in which some "attempted to shew that the mysteries of Religion may be mathematically demonstrated; as the authors of Philosophic, or Astronomic Principles, natural and reveal'd."³² In 1717 Whiston published a work entitled Astronomic Principles of Religion, natural and revealed, a major part of which was concerned with showing how the Conflagration and the new world of the millennium would occur as the natural result of cometary action on the planetary world.³³

It is particularly noteworthy, furthermore, that this allusion to Whiston in the Dunciad appears in the poem's vision of the absorption of "Mystery" into a mathematical-philosophical mode of reasoning which, as the notes put it, "has at length brought things to that pass, as to have it esteemed unphilosophical to rest in the first cause."³⁴ For throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the world-makers' works were constantly attacked for their tendencies to neglect final causes, and deny the place of mystery in the Creation.

In emphasizing the mechanically predetermined way in which comets would bring about the Conflagration "without the introduction of anything strictly Supernatural

or Miraculous,"³⁵ Whiston was essentially following Burnet's earlier, radical stress on the role of secondary causes in the creation. "If we would have a fair view and right apprehensions of Natural Providence," Burnet contended in his Theory, then

We must not cut the chains of it too short, by having recourse, without necessity, either to the First Cause, in explaining the Origins of things; or to Miracles, in explaining particular effects. . . .

36

These naturalistic treatments of Biblical miracles quickly provoked theologians like Bishop Croft to fear for God's place in the universe--in Burnet's view of Nature's operations in the universe, Croft claimed, "God is very near justled out of all."³⁷ But the threat to final causality contained in the world-makers' theories was perhaps most eloquently expressed by the mathematician James Keill. Pointing out how "till this Age of World Makers, Christians have always thought them the Creation and the Deluge such works as could never be produced by the Laws of Nature and Mechanism," Keill described the world-makers thus:

I know there is a sort of men who have excluded all final causes from the consideration of a Philosopher, . . . supposing his business is only to find out the true formal and efficient causes of all things, and not to concern himself with the design of nature, or the great end for which the God of Nature made anything.

38

The world-makers' disregard of final causes was also assailed in Baker's Reflections on Learning (1700) which

noted how, as a result of the world-makers' tendency to "frame Hypotheses," "Final Causes have become so much banished from . . . modern Physics," and in Thomas Hearne's Ductor Historicus (1723), which objected to the way in which Whiston and Burnet denied Moses' "Doctrine" that the Deluge "was a Miraculous Event produc'd by the immediate Hand of God," and asserted, instead, that "it was a Natural Effect of Second Causes."³⁹

After describing Truth's flight before Dulness's
40
advance, the neglect of final causes, and the disappearance of religious "Mystery" in mathematical reasoning, Pope presents a sober vision of the gradual extinguishing of religious and moral values:

Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,
And unawares Morality expires.
Nor public Flame, nor private, dares to shine;
Nor human Spark is left, nor Glimpse divine!
(ll. 649-652)

While the decay of religion was, as Sutherland remarks,
41
"only one aspect of the national degeneration which Pope saw, or thought he saw, in contemporary England," this decay occupies a prominent place in Pope's attack on the widespread disruption of values in the Dunciad. The main thrust of the satire in Book IV is clearly aimed at the irregligious speculations of "rationalizing divines" like the gloomy Clerk; and this satire can be seen, too, as a continuation of Pope's concern in the earlier versions of the poem with the religious perversions of such deists
42
as Collins, Tindal, Toland and Woolston. Pope's portrait

of the "gloomy Clerk," and his general concern in the Dunciad with deistic mutilations of "meek modern faith" bear an important relationship to his attacks on the world-makers, for the latter held a leading and vital place in the upheavals of eighteenth-century religious thought.

In her Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, Miss Nicolson, noting how Burnet "found himself hailed as a master of the freethinkers" following the publication of his Archaeologiae, has pointed out that "many in the early eighteenth century considered Burnet the father of English Deism."⁴³ Burnet himself, as Nicolson also indicates, was far from accepting such a radical interpretation of his ultra-liberal theology; nevertheless, the notion that Burnet was a leading force in deistic innovations remained "a widespread belief of the day."⁴⁴ While the Archaeologiae was widely damned by the orthodox as a "Burlesque upon Moses, and Destructive to the notion of Original Sin,"⁴⁵ and led to Burnet's removal as Clerk of King William III's Closet, Burnet continued his theological-philosophical publications throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In 1697 he published a series of three Remarks upon an Essay concerning Humane Understanding which attacked Locke's empirical approach to morality in favor of an a priori one, and advanced the idea of an "unfolding moral sense" for good within man;⁴⁶ and in his De Fide et Officium Christianorum (1728), he advocated

the idea, earlier adumbrated in his Theory, that religion was rooted not in revelation but in "that universal Consent of Mankind, or natural Instinct of Religion, which we see, more or less, throughout all Nations, Barbarous or Civil."⁴⁷

Whiston's role in the momentous alterations of religious values in the eighteenth century was hardly less significant. One of the most controversial theological figures of the eighteenth century, Whiston had been dismissed from Cambridge early in his career as the result of alleged "Arian" or "Socinian" leanings in his Boyle lectures of 1707; and his "Arian" or "Socinian" rejection of the Trinity, which was the result, as Leslie Stephen has pointed out, "of an attempt to reconcile Christian dogma to the a priori mode of reasoning,"⁴⁸ was chiefly responsible for making the Trinity a major topic of dispute in the early eighteenth century.⁴⁹ Whiston's denial of the Trinitarian mystery elicited, moreover, special comment in Swift's Mr. Collins's Discourse of Free-Thinking (1713): in the mock argument which Swift has Collins engage in to show that "the mystery is now revealed, that there is no such thing as mystery or revelation," Collins makes several allusions to what "Mr. Whiston the Socinian" says; in addition, in one passage, Swift concentrates his satiric forces on Whiston's "freethinking" rejection of Christ's divinity.⁵⁰ And Whiston soon became a favorite and particular target of scorn among such other conservative

and high-church religious leaders as Dr. Henry Sacheverell⁵²
and Bishop Francis Atterbury.

The various and profound secularizing tendencies in Burnet's and Whiston's theological views, tendencies which were widely looked upon during the early eighteenth century as symptomatic of the gradual erosion of religious values, may be seen to account, in part, for the Dunciad's vision of the extinction of Religion's "sacred fires."⁵³ Furthermore, Pope's portrait of the "Gloomy Clerk," which, in a crucial sense, stands at the center of Book IV, strongly suggests the pivotal role the world-makers' views occupy in the Dunciad's attack on contemporary theological-scientific perversions.

II

Pope's concern with man's failure to recognize his own limitations is perhaps most richly and gravely expressed in his depiction of the "gloomy Clerk" in Book IV of the Dunciad. The Clerk, undoubtedly the most "accomplish'd" of the sons of Dulness, enters the "scene" of her triumph on the cosmic stage at a strategic point in her charges to the dunces:

O! would the Sons of Men once think their Eyes
And Reason giv'n them but to study Flies!
See Nature in some partial narrow shape,
And let the Author of the Whole escape:
Learn but to trifle; or, who most observe,
To wonder at their Maker, not to serve.

(11. 453-458)

In the two hundred lines or so which precede this speech of Dulness, Pope dramatizes the dangers in one extreme of contemporary science--the narrowing down of the study of nature by antiquarian-virtuosi into a microscopic grasp of a multitude of unrelated facts. The comic parade of these "trifling" shrinkers of knowledge, who "wander in a wilderness of Moss" (l. 450), is now succeeded on the cosmic stage of the poem by a representative of the opposite extreme--the metaphysician-scientist, who, with a "head that turns at super-lunar things, / Poiz'd with a tail" (ll. 451-2), soars into dangerous speculations concerning matters which Pope, and a whole generation of humanists, considered man incapable of knowing.

In the opening lines of the portrait, Pope presents the Clerk as one uniquely endowed to fulfill the Goddess's command that her sons not serve the "Author of the Whole":

Be that my task (replies a gloomy Clerk,
Sworn foe to Myst'ry, yet divinely dark;
Whose pious hope aspires to see the day
When Moral Evidence shall quite decay,
And damns implicit faith, and holy lies,
Prompt to impose, and fond to dogmatize.)
(ll. 459-464)

And in the following lines Pope shows the Clerk's theological perversions to be imbedded in a scientific-philosophical reasoning which is bent on replacing divine order with a mechanistic and egocentric order of values:

Let others creep by timid steps, and slow,
On plain Experience lay foundations low,
By common sense to common knowledge bred,

And last, to Nature's Cause thro' Nature led.
All-seeing in thy mists, we want no guide,
Murther of Arrogance, and Source of Pride!
We nobly take the high Priori Road,
And reason downward, till we doubt of God:
Make Nature still incroach upon his plan;
And shove him off as far as e'er we can:
Thrust some Mechanic Cause into his place;
Or bind in Matter, or diffuse in Space.
Or, at one bound o'er-leaping all his laws,
Make God Man's Image, Man the final Cause.
(11. 465-478)

This defacement of the divine order of reality results
in the profane moral attitudes of the Clerk and his
followers, who

Find Virtue local, all Relation scorn,
See all in Self, and but for self be born:
Of nought so certain as our Reason still,
Of nought so doubtful as of Soul and Will;
(11. 479-482)

and the portrait concludes with a sweeping indictment
of Epicurean-like naturalism and deism in the society of
Pope's day:

Oh hide the God still more! and make us see
Such as Lucretius drew, a God like Thee:
Wrapt up in Self, a God without a Thought,
Regardless of our merit or default.
Or that bright Image to our fancy draw,
Which Theocles in raptur'd vision saw,
While thro' Poetic scenes the Genius roves,
Or wanders wild in Academic Groves;
That NATURE our Society adores,
Where Tindal dictates, and Silenus snores.
(IV, 11. 483-492)

Pope's "gloomy Clerk" represents, of course, a
complex artistic figuration of man's ever present
satanic urge to leap over the bounds of divine law.
While the portrait contains several allusions to
seventeenth-century speculations--"Hobbs," "Spinoza" and

"DesCartes" (who is associated with the folly of the Clerk's "Mechanic Cause") are specified in the notes--⁵⁴ the fact that Pope also had in mind contemporary unorthodox thinking is seen in the allusions made to Shaftesbury and Tindal. In sketching the dangerous theological-scientific tendencies in his own time, Pope is also, to be sure, "more concerned with fashionable follies than with individual fools."⁵⁵ Still the possibility that Pope's attacks have a particular focal point in the world-makers' speculations is suggested by Pope's connection of the Clerk's distaste for "Myst'ry" with a type of mechanistic theorizing which, as the notes say, rests "in Second causes, with a total disregard of the First."⁵⁶ For, as we have seen, at the end of Book IV Pope linked the debasement of religious "Mystery" and the neglect of the "final cause" of creation, with the world-makers' mechanistic theories. Moreover, the key role the world-makers' theories play in the Clerk's portrait is further suggested in the connection which exists between Pope's attack on the "misapplication" of human reason in Book IV and the Scriblerians' attacks on the world-makers in the Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus.

A fundamental issue underlying Pope's attack on "Investigators of Nature" like the Clerk involves the question of the means and limits of human knowledge and science. It is generally agreed that Book IV of the Dunciad developed out of a planned sequel to An Essay

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on Man; this sequel, as Pope explained in a letter to Swift on March 25, 1736, was to touch upon the following subjects,

1. Of the Extent and Limits of Human Reason, and Science.
2. A view of the useful and therefore attainable, and of the un-useful and therefore un-attainable, Arts.
3. Of the nature, ends, application, and the use of different Capacities..
4. Of the use of Learning, of the Science of the World, and of Wit;

and it was to conclude with a "Satire against the mis-application of all these, exemplify'd by pictures, characters, and examples." That Pope's "picture" of the Clerk was particularly intended to exemplify the "misapplication" of "Human Reason and Science" can be seen in the 1743 commentary on lines 465-468 in the portrait:

"Let others creep--thro' Nature Led." In these lines are described the Disposition of the rational Inquirer, and the means and end of Knowledge. With regard to his disposition, the contemplation of the works of God with human faculties, must needs make a modest and sensible man timorous and fearful; and that will naturally direct him to the right means of acquiring the little knowledge his faculties are capable of, namely plain and sure experience.

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Between the publication of An Essay on Man in 1733-1734 and the first publication of Book IV of the Dunciad in 1742, another work, also vitally concerned with abuses of learning in the field of contemporary science, appeared under Pope's name--the Scriblerian Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works, and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus. The latter, which was published in April, 1741, in The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope in Prose, Volume II,

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"afforded," as Leslie Beattie has observed, "a natural background for the Dunciad attacks, and an advantageous support for the New Dunciad (1742). . . ." ⁶¹ The close relationship, however, which exists between the Memoirs' attacks on Scriblerus's misguided labors as a natural philosopher and Pope's attacks on misapplied learning and science in Book IV of the Dunciad has not, as yet, been adequately examined. Pope's intention that the two works be connected in some way by the reader can be seen in the fact that he saw fit to publish the Memoirs and Book IV of the Dunciad jointly in one volume of his works in July, 1742, and again in November, 1743. ⁶² (In addition to revising and editing the Memoirs for their first publication, Pope had become the undisputed leader of the Scriblerian project from the time of Swift's departure from England in 1727.) ⁶³

In the last chapter of the Memoirs, "Of the Discoveries and Works of the Great Scriblerus," some two dozen scientific theories are attributed to that "Prodigy of Science," Martinus Scriblerus, who "without the trivial help of Experiments, or Observations, hath been the Inventor of most of the modern Systems and Hypotheses." ⁶⁴ This last allusion, as Tuveson and Nicolson have ⁶⁵ shown, has specific satiric reference to the world-makers' systems; in addition, almost one-half of Scriblerus's "Discoveries" contain further attacks on the world-makers' ⁶⁶ various speculations. The strong affinity which exists

between the perverse "Disposition" of "the rational Inquirer" in Pope's sketch of the Clerk and Scriblerus's disposition in the Memoirs is suggested in Pope's first note on the Clerk, in which he refers to his "puzzled and embroiled Systems";⁶⁷ moreover, these systems, like Scriblerus's, rest upon a less trivial foundation than "plain and sure Experience." And in a following note on the Clerk, Pope significantly describes how the Clerk's disdain for such lowly means of knowledge leads him to join those a priori reasoners,

who, instead of reasoning from a visible World to an invisible God, took the other road; and from an invisible God (to whom they had given attributes agreeable to certain metaphysical principles formed out of their own imaginations) reasoned downwards to a visible world in theory, of Man's Creation. . . .⁶⁸

This attack on a priori reasoning in Book IV is aimed primarily, of course, at Descartes (whom Pope refers to specifically in Book IV's notes to "the high Priori Road" and the "Mechanic Cause"); the full significance of Pope's concern with Cartesian a priori speculations on a "visible world in theory, of Man's Creation," can be seen, however, against the background of contemporary attacks on the world-makers' "theories" and "creations."

In his An Examination of Dr. Burnet's Theory of the Earth, James Keill, noting how the world-makers "only cultivated their own wild imaginations,"⁶⁹ commented on their penchant for world-making thus:

But M. DesCartes . . . is to be blamed for all of this world-making, for his has encouraged so very much of this presumptuous pride in the Philosophers, that they think they understand all the works of Nature. . . . He was the first world-maker this Century produced, for he supposes that God at the beginning created only a certain quantity of matter, and motion, and from thence he endeavours to show, how, by the necessary laws of Mechanisme, without any extraordinary concurrence of the Divine Power, the world and all that therein is might have been produced.

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This association of the world-makers' systems with Cartesian theorizing became a standard argument against their speculations. For example, in his Abyssinian Philosophy Confuted, Robert St. Clair bracketed Burnet's creation of the antedeluvian world with "the Fictions of DesCartes," and contended that Burnet's notion of "Oily particles" in the formation of this world was impossible, for

not only Oil, but also Salt, Earth, etc. are made of Water, which is known a posteriori, or by the effect, of experiment (The Foundation of all the Knowledge we have of Nature). But as for the Antedeluvian World, since it doth not so much concern us now, I shall leave the consideration of its Principles to the Abyssinian Philosophers /I.e., Descartes and Burnet/, who demonstrate all things a priori.

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Similar attacks were made throughout the eighteenth century by scientists like Thomas Baker in his Reflections on Learning (1700) and Benjamin Martin in his Philosophical Grammar (1738), by poets like Bevil Higgons in his Poem on Nature (1736) and Moses Browne in his Essay on the Universe (1739), and even by continental philosophers like

Voltaire in his Dissertation sur les changemens arrivés
dans notre globe (1729)⁷². But perhaps the sharpest attack
on the Cartesian a priorism of the world-makers' theories
occurred in Lord Bolingbroke's Letters to Mr. de Pouilly
(1720), and Letters, or Essays Addressed to Alexander
Pope, Esq. (1732 ?). In the latter, Bolingbroke rebuked
those who "rather than creep up slowly, à posteriori, to
a little general knowledge" would "soar up at once as
far, and as high, as imagination can carry them," and
"descend again, armed with systems and arguments à
priori"; and in the former he pointed to Descartes and
Burnet as prime examples of "reasoners à priori," who
make "hypothetical worlds" by imagining what might have
been according to their "own abstract reasonings."⁷³

At the end of his Clerk portrait, Pope describes
how the Clerk's type of "high Priori" rambling "after
Visions" culminates in the "raptur'd vision" (l. 488) of
an Epicurean deity. The system-making "raptures" of the
"Bedlam's Prophet" in Book III, which produced all of
Cibber's "fanciful" visions, now draws to the Clerk's
"fancy" (l. 487) the vision of a God "Such as Lucretius
drew" (l. 484). A leading item among Scriblerus's
"systems" in the 1741 Memoirs was, we recall, the world-
makers' "Epicurean-Mechanical" explications.

As the leading actor on the stage of Book IV of the
Dunciad, the Clerk epitomizes the perverse "misapplication"
of "Human Reason and Science" which has brought Dulness

to her new triumphant "scene" on the cosmic stage. Furthermore, in this new "scene" of man's alienation from divine light, the Clerk, who "at one bound" "o'er leaps" God's laws, vividly embodies man's satanic tendency to refuse to play his proper role in God's great "Theatre." By linking the "scene" of Dulness's new world and the Clerk's presumptuous failure to recognize his own limitations to the world-makers' theories of man's increasing rational powers on the world stage, Pope suggests the dangers inherent in the widespread scientific progressivist concepts of his own time. This suggestion is also reinforced in Pope's further descriptions of the "actors" and action in Book IV of the Dunciad.

The Clerk's "raptur'd vision" recalls Pope's earlier image, near the beginning of the book, of the "extatic stare" of "Mad Mathesis" (ll. 31-33). In depicting Dulness mounting her throne in lines 16-30 of Book IV, Pope describes how true "Science groans in Chains" (l. 21) beneath Dulness's "footstool," so that only "something ⁷⁴ like each Science" is admitted to her court; and then he shows how

Mad Mathesis alone was unconfin'd,
 Too mad for mere material chains to bind,
 Now to pure Space lifts her extatic stare,
 Now running round the Circle, finds it square.
 (IV, ll. 31-34)

It is "Mathematics," of course, into which religious "Mystery" is later absorbed, and the allusion to Whiston in that image as well as in the image of the moon-struck

Prophet's "madding hour" (l. 12) suggests that Pope had in mind here something more than a conventional jibe at "circle-squares." The rigid mathematical format of "Lemmata and Corollaries" in which Whiston presented his pseudo-scientific speculations had been satirized earlier by both Swift in his Battle of the Books (1704) and Gay in his A True and Faithful Narrative (1732).⁷⁵ In his note to "Mad Mathesis," Pope makes reference to scientific investigations "concerning the real Quantity of Matter";⁷⁶ and in the Memoirs, Martinus's "discovery" of such "systems" as "all the new Theories of the Deluge" was coupled with such chimerical pursuits as an "Investigation of the Quantity of real Matter in the Universe," and the enriching of "Mathematics with many precise and Geometrical Quadratures of the Circle."⁷⁷

The image of Mathesis's "running round the Circle" soon leads to another remarkable image of circular activity in the poem--the dunces' movement about the "Centre" of "their dusky Queen" (l. 80). After describing how the dunces have been "summon'd to the Throne" of Dulness (ll. 71-2), Pope pictures how each dunce feels the "inward sway" (l. 73) of Dulness's "Attraction" thus:

None need a guide, by sure Attraction led,
And strong impulsive gravity of Head:
None want a place, for all their Centre found,
Hung to the Goddess, and coher'd around.
Not closer, orb in orb, conglob'd are seen
The buzzing Bees about their dusky Queen.
The gath'ring number, as it moves along,
Involves a vast involuntary throng,

Who gently drawn, and struggling less and less,
Roll in her Vortex, and her pow'r confess.

Nor absent they, no members of her state,
Who pay her homage in her sons, the Great.
(IV, 11. 75-84, 91-92)

This imagery of the dunces' atomistic revolutions about their Queen is an appropriate one, for the latter is a God "Such as Lucretius drew," and one, too, whose world is founded upon an "Epicurean Opinion." The passage contains further subtleties: the dunces, needing no guide, since they are their own "masters in all Sciences,"⁷⁸ are seen atomistically drawn to Dulness by the very "Mechanic Cause" they seek to thrust in God's place--Dulness's "Vortex" here can be seen vitally linked to Pope's later attack on Descartes' notion of "Subtile
Matter,"⁷⁹ or atomistic material moving mechanically through
⁸⁰
"Vortexes." Pope's artful allusions to Epicurean-Cartesian mechanical systems in these lines take on larger dimensions, moreover, in his description of Dulness's "new world" in terms of astronomical "systems":

In this new world of Dulness each . . . hath its appointed station, as best suits its nature, and concurs to the harmony of the System. The first drawn only by the strong and simple impulse of Attraction, are represented as falling directly down into her. . . . The second, . . . are carried, by the composition of these two, in planetary revolutions round her centre. . . . The third are properly excentrical, and no constant members of her state or system. . . . Their use in their Perihelion, or nearest approach to Dulness, is the same in the moral World, as that of Comets in the natural, namely to refresh and recreate the Dryness and decays of the system.

Pope's reference here to an astrological "recreation" of moral and natural worlds is an important one, for, as we have seen, in the beginning of Book IV he described Dulness's new "moral world" rising from the "Dissolution" of the "natural world," and, at the end of the book, he pictured the arrival of that new world against a background of astrological disturbances.

Whiston's view of the recreation of the new moral world of the millennium was based, as we have seen, upon the concept of cometary actions on the natural world; and in his Astronomic Principles, which Pope alludes to in the astrological imagery at the end of Book IV, Whiston described this "recreation" in graphic detail. Thus, in a section in the Astronomic Principles devoted to explaining the "system of comets," Whiston pointed out how comets have "such vast Atmospheres about them, and Tails derived from the same, especially after their Perihelia," that they

seem fit to cause vast Mutations in the Planets, particularly in bringing on them Deluges and Conflagrations, according as the Planets pass through their Atmospheres, in their Descent to, or Ascent from the Sun; . . . /and/ purging the outward Regions of them in order to a Renovation.

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Both Gays's A True and Faithful Narrative and Pope's God's Revenge against Punning contained hits at Whiston's

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cometary prophecies, and in the Memoirs we find further allusion to them in Scriblerus's invention of "Tide-Tables, for a Comet, that is, to approximate towards the

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Earth." Such prophecies received, however, richest satiric treatment in Swift's account in Gulliver's Travels of the probable destruction of the world by the next approaching comet:

For if in its /comet's/ Perihelion it should approach within a certain Degree of the Sun, (as by their Calculations they have reason to dread) it will conceive a Degree of Heat ten thousand Times more intense than that of red hot glowing Iron; and in its Absence from the Sun, carry a blasing Tail Ten Hundred Thousand and Fourteen Miles long.

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After the episode of the atomistic gathering of the dunces Pope takes the reader on a brilliant excursion into contemporary educational follies involving the separation of words and things. The dunces' various, accumulative defacements of traditional rhetorical values soon lead the verbal critic, Aristarchus, to boast to Dulness:

Thine is the genuine head of many a house,
And much Divinity without a Noûs.
Nor could a BARROW work on ev'ry block,
Nor has one ATTERBURY spoil'd the flock.
See! still thy own, the heavy Canon roll,
And Metaphysic smokes involve the Pole.
For thee we dim the eyes, and stuff the head
With all such reading as was never read:
For thee explain a thing till all men doubt it,
And write about it, Goddess, and about it:
So spins the silk-worm small its slender store,
And labours till it clouds itself all o'er.
(11. 243-254)

In the notes on line 248, "And Metaphysic smokes," Aristarchus is described as now entering on the subject of "the teaching of Things," and in a note soon after this one, he is pictured ready "to teach things, without

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profit." Pope's accounts throughout Book IV of the duncial division of words and things, of Aristarchus' Richard Bentley's "critic Eye" (l. 223), and the teaching of "things without profit," have a notable relationship to the Memoirs' accounts of Martinus Scriblerus's varied activities. Thus, in Chapter VII of the Memoirs, Scriblerus is depicted as having drawn from both his parents "a natural disposition to sport himself with Words," and having been taught that what he "learn'd as a Logician, he must forget as a natural Philosopher";⁸⁹ and in Chapter IX the Scriblerians described "How Martin became a great Critic," converting "every Trifle into a serious thing," by pointing out that Bentley's recent editions of Terence, Horace and Milton were "in truth the Work of no other than our Scriblerus."⁹⁰

The Memoirs' concern with contemporary science's teaching of profitless things, moreover, throws some important light on Pope's odd images of the "heavy Canon roll" and the "smokes" involving the "Pole" (ll. 247-248). One of the more prominent of Scriblerus's quixotic "Projects" for the "universal Benefit of Mankind" was his scheme "to build Two Poles to the Meridian" in order to "make the Longitude as easy to be calculated as the Latitude;"⁹¹ and in a letter written to Swift on July 17, 1714, Arbuthnot pointed out the similarity between this Scriblerian ridicule of longitude schemes and Whiston's latest "project" for discovering the longitude by means

of "lighthouses and explosion of bombs at a certain hour."⁹² Whiston's scheme for discovering the longitude which involved, among other things, the idea that "fire-ships" should "discharge huge cannon"⁹³ in the sky, soon became a pet Scriblerian target for absurd and worthless scientific activity. In addition to Pope's or Swift's ridicule of this scheme in the "Ode, for Musick, on the Longitude," Gay, Pope and Arbuthnot also glanced at it in Three Hours After Marriage,⁹⁴ and, in a pamphlet entitled To the Right Honourable Mayor, Arbuthnot again mocked the scheme by referring to the "Crews of the bomb-vessels, under the direction of Mr. Whiston"⁹⁵ being "reduced to Streights for want of firing." Finally, Whiston's canon-firing scheme was also included in the Memoirs among Scriblerus's great "Discoveries": "His were the Projects of Perpetuum Mobiles, Flying Engines and Pacing Saddles; the Method of discovering the Longitude by Bomb-Vessels. . . ." ⁹⁶ It is noteworthy, too, that the "heavy Canon roll" from out of a head containing "much Divinity without a Noûs," the latter image referring, as the notes explain, to "that system of Divinity . . . which terminates in blind Nature without a Noûs."⁹⁷

Pope's following image in this passage, of the silk-worm that "labours till it clouds itself all o'er" (l. 254), is an important one--the activities of the chief dunce, Cibber, are described in similar terms in Book I when he

begs Dulness to "quite unravel all the reas'ning thread, /
And hang some curious cobweb in its stead!" (I, ll. 179-
180). While the spider image was employed throughout the
seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries by partisans
of both the "modern" and "ancient" parties,⁹⁸ the image had
taken on new, and important, application as the result
of Swift's portrait in The Battle of the Books of the
modern world-maker as a "Spider" who "Spins and Spits
wholly from himself," and "displays to you his great
Skill in Architecture, and Improvement in the Mathe-
matics."⁹⁹ Furthermore, the spider image appears in an-
other Scriblerian satire on the world-makers in a manner
which gives deeper significance to Pope's use of it at
this point in the Dunciad.

In 1723 Gay wrote an Epistle to the most Learned
Doctor Woodward, from a Prude, that was unfortunately
metamorphosed on Saturday, December 29, 1722,¹⁰⁰ as a sequel
to Pope's and Arbuthnot's joint pamphlet, Annus Mira-
bilis in which the prediction had been made that on
December 29, 1722, men and women would exchange sexes.
In the Annus Mirabilis, which was published in the
"Third Volume" of the Swift-Pope Miscellanies (1732), Pope
and Arbuthnot had wryly commented on the advent of this
sexual transformation:

It is hardly possible to imagine the Revolutions
that this wonderful Phenomenon will occasion
over the Face of the Earth. . . . These are
surprising Scenes; but I beg leave to affirm,
that the solemn Operations of Nature are Sub-
jects of Contemplation, not of Ridicule;

and in the Epistle to Doctor Woodward the surprising "Scenes" of nature transforming a prude were artfully connected with the world-makers' description of the
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"Scenes" of the Deluge. After invoking Woodward's aid in the beginning of the Epistle, "O Son of Galen, lend
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your friendly aid," Gay went on to ridicule Woodward's varied antiquarian activities:

A while let your curious Fossils rest;
Each scaly Fish, and each four-footed Beast:
On Nature's wond'rous Trifles do not dwell,
The beauteous Butterfly, or shining Shell;
.
.
.
Let not old Egypt's Monarch's plague your Head,
For what's a Mummy to a Modern Maid?

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In 1725 Gay returned to Woodward in his To a Lady on her Passion for Old China, in a commentary on the extremes of contemporary science:

Philosophers more grave than wise
Hunt science down in Butterflies;
Or fondly poring on a Spider,
Stretch human contemplation wider;
Fossiles give joy to Galen's soul,
He digs for knowledge, like a Mole;
In shells so learn'd, that all agree
No fish that swims knows more than he!

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Gay's allusion in this last passage to Woodward's "spider"-like speculations were part of a sustained Scriblerian campaign against the "world-making" naturalist, for Woodward, as Charles Kerby-Miller points out, had the "unenviable distinction" of being "the individual most
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frequently and severely satirized" by the Scriblerians. In addition to the attack in Three Hours After Marriage on Woodward's world-making speculations on the "Universal

Deluge," the Scriblerians also ridiculed those speculations in Scriblerus's scheme in the Memoirs to find a "Menstrum to dissolve the Stone, made of Dr. Woodward's Universal Deluge Water." But the world-makers' scientific activities were by no means limited to "spider"-like conjectural theorizing; their scientific activities could also be seen, as Gay's allusions to Woodward's antiquarianism attest, as vivid illustrations of the narrowing down of the study of Nature into a mole-eyed absorption with such "wondrous Trifles" of Nature as the "shining Shell" and the "beauteous Butterfly."

The leading place Woodward occupied in the Scriblerian campaign against virtuosi and antiquarians can be seen, furthermore, in the fact that the entire satire in Chapter III of the Memoirs on the antiquarianism of the "Virtuoso," Martinus Scriblerus, was intended as a direct parody on Woodward's character as a scientific collector. The plot of Three Hours After Marriage, moreover, centered upon the "Virtuoso" "Fossile's" (i.e., Woodward's) threatened cuckoldry by two of his own "curiosities," a "Mummy" and "a Crocodile." And in his "versification" of the Fourth Satire of Dr. Donne, Pope also poked fun at Woodward's zeal for collecting rarities in describing the court bore as

A verier Monster than on Africk's Shore
The Sun e'r got, or slimy Nilus bore,
Or Sloane, or Woodwards wondrous Shelves contain.

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The range and richness of Pope's portrait of the antiquarian-virtuoso in Book IV of the Dunciad, can be more

fully assessed, I suggest, in the light of these and other Scriblerian attacks on the world-makers' varied scientific absurdities.

Soon after Aristarchus boasts of the dulness hidden in "Wisdom's grave disguise" (l. 240), a motley troupe of antiquarian-virtuosi coin collectors, "shell"-gatherers, and "butterfly"-fanciers parade upon Dulness's stage. The "Antiquary," Annius, first appears before Dulness's throne, and entreats the Goddess to make her other sons "Virtuosos";¹¹⁰ and he quickly calls for her blessing on his "numismatic" endeavors, proclaiming how each youth, assisted by his eyes, shall

Now see an Attys, now a Cecrops clear,
To Headless Phoebe his fair bride postpone,
Honour a Syrian Prince above his own;
Lord of an Otho, if I vouch it true;
Blest in one Niger, till he knows of two.
(IV, ll. 363, 367-370)

Annius's speech is then suddenly interrupted by a contentious colleague:

Mummius o'erheard him; Mummius, Fool-renown'd,
Who like his Cheops stinks above the ground,
Fierce as a startled Adder, swell'd, and said,
Rattling an ancient Sistrum at his head.
Speak'st thou of Syrian Princes? Traitor base!
Mine, Goddess! mine is all the horned race.
(IV, ll. 371-376)

These antiquarian coin collectors bear a striking resemblance to Pope's earlier portrait of coin collectors in his Epistle to Mr. Addison, occasioned on his Dialogues¹¹¹
on Medals (c. 1716); in the latter poem, in which Woodward¹¹²
is ridiculed as Vadius, we hear how

To gain Pescennius ¹¹³Niger one employs his schemes,
One grasps a Cecrops in ecstatic dreams;
Poor Vadius, long with learned spleen devour'd,
Can taste no pleasure since his Shield was scour'd;
And Curio, restless by the Fair-one's side
Sighs for an Otho, and neglects his bride.

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Pope's portrait of Mummius in Book IV has received several possible identifications, including the opinion of Elwin and Courthope that the portrait was intended for Woodward; and the fact that Pope had earlier included Woodward in his gallery of coin collectors gives much weight to this identification. ¹¹⁵ Furthermore, Pope's punning allusion to "the Mummies" Mummius was so fond of, recalls ¹¹⁶ Gay's earlier playful pun on Woodward's "Mummy"; and in the Memoirs' parody of Woodward-like antiquarian activities we heard too of Scriblerus's concern in the "effusion of Coins," and "the procuring of Mummies." ¹¹⁷ The most significant allusion to Mummies in Scriblerian literature appears, however, in the introduction of a Mummy upon the stage in Three Hours After Marriage--the leading exhibit in the "Collection" of Fossile's Woodward's "Egyptian" rarities in the play is a "Mummy." "The Eruption of . . . Horns" which Fossile fears in Act II of the play, moreover, may be seen alluded to in Mummius's odd remark in the Dunciad: "Mine, Goddess! mine is all the horned race" (l. 376). Woodward's connection with Mummius is further suggested by Pope's relation, in his notes to line 376, of the "strange story" of the traveler who met "two Physicians," one of whom "advised

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Purgations, the other Vomits," for one of the most lively and sensational scientific battles of the period involved a controversy between Woodward and Dr. Mead over the relative value of vomits and purges.

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Pope's following images in Book IV of virtuosi, "crown'd" with "weeds" and "shells" (l. 398), hunting for the "beauteous" "Butterfly" (ll. 430, 436) and generally learning "but to trifle" (l. 457), clearly suggest the kind of delight with "Nature's wond'rous Trifles" Woodward was associated with by the Scriblerians. The two major types of proud players in Dulness's new "scene" in Book IV--the antiquarian-virtuoso and scientific-metaphysician--are thus connected in the poem with the world-makers' varied scientific activities. The "grossly comic charade" of duncedom on the stage of Book IV accordingly assumes profound dimensions, for Dulness's new cosmic scene of moral and social anarchy can be seen to be an artful parody of the world-makers' notion of a new earthly "scene"--the "Heavenly City of the Virtuosi"--of man's moral and social perfection through scientific progress.

Near the end of Book IV, after Dulness assigns each actor his role of pride in this new stage setting of the world, Pope describes how her "restoration" "concludeth in drawing the Curtain, and laying all her Children to rest." The new brave world of scientific conjecture and folly Pope has so richly captured now closes with the hand of Dulness shutting up the universal drama of human existence:

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Lo! thy dread Empire, CHAOS! is restor'd;
Light dies before thy uncreating word:
Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall;
And Universal Darkness buries All.

(ll. 653-656)

The "gloomy Clerk's" boast of removing God from the new "scene" of Dulness's reign becomes a reality in this somber, concluding vision of "uncreating" anarchy; this anarchy, a reflection of the moral and social upheavals fostered by scientific progressivist concepts in Pope's own day, is seen dropping the curtain on the theocentric drama of life. Throughout the Dunciad, as in all of his other works, Pope utilized the traditional concept of the world as a stage as an emblem of man's place in divine order; and at the close of this poem, the last of Pope's works, we see man's prideful refusal to play his assigned role on God's stage as that which ushers in universal darkness. Through the device of stage metaphor and imagery in the Dunciad, Pope has voiced, in the name of traditional Christian ideas of progress, "the impersonal trumpet tones of the public defender on the walls of Civitas Dei,"¹²¹ and, at the same time, has presented a compelling, unified satire on contemporary attempts to refashion those "walls" with the "more-up-to-date materials"¹²² of scientific progressivism.

Notes

1. See "Argument" to Book III, Twick. Ed., p. 56.
2. The four books were unified and called The Greater Dunciad in 1743.
3. Augustan Satire: Intention and Idiom in English Poetry 1660-1750 (Oxford, 1965), pp. 125-6.
4. Edward Young's description of the 1728 three-book version of the Dunciad in a letter to Thomas Tickell, dated February 7, 1728 (Richard Eustace Tickell, Thomas Tickell and the Eighteenth-Century Poets /London, 1931/, p. 143; cited by Jack, Augustan Satire, p. 126).
5. Augustan Satire, p. 126. Warton's view of the Dunciad was stated in his Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope, 4th ed. (London, 1782), vol. II, p. 374.
6. Newton Demands the Muse: Newton's Optiks and the Eighteenth-Century Poets (Hamden, Conn., 1963), p. 140.
7. An Essay on Man, Epistle I, l. 101.
8. Cf. "Martinus Scriblerus, Of the Poem" (Twick. Ed., p. 48), where Pope calls the dunces "the actors in our poem."
9. Pope: Rape of the Lock (New York, 1961), p. 9.
10. See note to Book I, l. 45, Twick. Ed., p. 274.
11. Dulness's hope, later expressed in l. 599, "Perhaps more high some daring son may soar," can be seen linked to Rich's angel-like soaring in the theatrical firmament of Book III. The suggestion of an angel-like estimation of oneself here is strengthened in Pope's note to Book IV, l. 517, in which he describes the dunces being lead "thro' the several apartments"

- of Dulness's "Mystic Dome" or "Palace," to put "on a new Nature" (Twick. Ed., p. 393); in Book I that "new Nature" involved, we recall, ascending out of the "terrestrial race" (I, l. 267).
12. See "Martinus Scriblerus, Of the Poem," Twick. Ed., p. 51.
 13. Note to Book IV, l. 15, Twick. Ed., p. 341.
 14. See note to Book IV, l. 492, Twick. Ed., p. 390.
 15. Pope's note on the phrase "seeds of fire," reads: "The Epicurean language, Semina rerum, or Atoms. . . ." (p. 391).
 16. Cf. Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, p. 238, and Tuveson, "Swift and the World-Makers," p. 67.
 17. (London, 1685), "Preface." Further on in this work Croft accused Burnet of intending to "set up a new Sect of Philosophers, something like Epicurus and his Atoms, but far exceeding him. . . ." (p. 134).
 18. James Keill, An Examination of Dr. Burnet's Theory of the Earth, 2nd ed. (London, 1734), p. 188.
 19. Reflections Upon Learning, Wherein is shown the Insufficiency Thereof, in its several Particulars. In Order to evince the Usefulness and Necessity, of Revelation, 3rd ed. (London, 1700), pp. 79ff.
 20. John Ray, The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creation (London, 1691); Richard Bentley, The Folly and Unreasonableness of Atheism (London, 1693); Bevil Higgons, A Poem on Nature (London, 1736). Cf. Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, pp. 256-7, 229.
 21. Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works, and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus, by John Arbuthnot, John Gay, Robert Harley, Thomas Parnell, Alexander Pope, and Jonathan Swift; ed. Charles Kerby-Miller (New Haven, Conn., 1950), p. 167. All quotations from the Memoirs will be taken from this edition. See Tuveson, "Swift and the World-Makers," p. 67, and Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, p. 247.
 22. Cf. Theory, Book IV, p. 98. A basic ingredient in Burnet's approach to the earth's history lay in his concept that the moral world acted in perfect consonance with the physical state of Nature, so that with the dissolution of the old "ruined" earth, a

new moral order would be established. In Spectator #146 (August 17, 1711), Richard Steele commented on Burnet's idea of the synchronized action of the moral and natural worlds thus: "He /Burnet/ has . . . examined the ways of Providence, from the Creation to the Dissolution of the Visible World. How pleasing must have been the Speculation, to observe Nature and Providence move together, the physical and moral World march the same Pace. . . ." (The Spectator, 10th ed. /London, 1729/, vol. II, pp. 239-40).

23. Theory, Book III, p. 93. Burnet's theory of the millennium pivoted around the argument that the chaos contained in itself the "seeds" for the production of a new world, since that world would arise automatically, according to the original mechanical principles that produced the first egg-world. Cf. Theory, Book III, pp. 94ff.
24. Theory, "Preface." Cf. Addison's lines on Burnet's "new world" in An Ode to the Learned Dr. Thomas Burnet: "Yet these remains we now behold, / . . . Shall from a new and fairer mould / A new and fairer earth compose. . . ." (p. 584, ll. 49, 51-2).
25. Note to Book IV, ll. 11-12, Twick. Ed., p. 340.
26. In the Theory Burnet noted that there was "certain Grand Issues or Events upon which the rest /of the Divine Plot of Creation/" depended ("Preface"), and in Book III he quoted Dion Cassius in describing one sign of the last great "event," the millennium: ". . . the Sun was hid, as if he had been under a great Eclipse. The day was turn'd into night, and light into darkness. . . . /some/ thought the World was returning to its first Chaos, or going to be all consum'd with fire" (Book III, pp. 40-41).
27. Cf. James M. Osborn, "'That on Whiston,' by John Gay," pp. 73-8. Whiston's interest in eclipses can be gauged from the following titles from several of his scientific pamphlets: The Black Day exemplified in the Eclipse of 1715 (London, 1715); An Account of the Eclipses of the Sun, 1715 and 1724 (London, 1724); A Scheme of the Solar Eclipse, May 11, 1724 (London, 1724).
28. "Gay and Pope to Caryll," April, 1715, The Correspondence of Alexander Pope, vol. I, p. 288. Lieutenant-General John Tidcombe (1642-1713) was a member of the Kit-Cat Club and an early acquaintance of Pope's. In an earlier letter to Caryll (Correspondence, vol. I, p. 215), Pope described himself as caught up "in the

very center of nonsense" in speaking with Tidcombe. In his "Pope and 'The Great Shew of Nature'" (p. 310), Sherburne refers to this letter as part of his argument that Pope was "entranced" by Whiston's thinking, and thus misses the whole joke of Pope's coupling Whiston's lucubrations with Tidcombe's "nonsense," as well as the significance of Pope's further ironic reference to the Scriblerian ridicule of Whiston in the "copy of verses" on the longitude.

29. First published in the Swift-Pope Miscellanies in Prose and Verse (1727), "Last Volume," this "Ode" has long been associated with Gay. James Osborn has recently presented strong evidence against Gay's authorship, suggesting that the poem's scatological nature makes Swift a likely candidate ("'That on Whiston,' by John Gay," p. 78). While both Swift and Pope were credited by contemporaries with the "Ode" (Cf. Pope's Minor Poems, p. 415), one piece of internal evidence suggests the possibility that Pope wrote the "extraordinary copy of verses" himself. The second line of the "Ode" calls Whiston "wicked" (Miscellanies, p. 172), and in l. 22 of An Epistle to Henry Cromwell, Esq. (1707) Pope made reference to the "wicked works of Whiston" (Minor Poems, p. 25).
30. Ll. 79-80, Minor Poems, p. 27.
31. The Prose Works of Alexander Pope, Volume I, 1711-1720, p. 270. In a 1731 attack on Whiston entitled Whistoneutes, an anonymous writer, calling himself Simon Scriblerus, ridiculed Whiston's prophecy that the millennium would occur in 1736 thus: "you are got a Star-gazing and a Cock-horse into the Skies, into Eclipses. . . . But if thou shouldst happen to live, and see thy Prophecy come to nothing, thou mayst remove the fulfilling of it till five or seven Years farther, that so thou mayst keep up the credit of thy Spirit of Prophecy" (p. 90). It is interesting that the author of this pamphlet referred to himself in the work as a "very distant Relation of the renowned Martin Scriblerus," and explained, in a marginal gloss, that "Dr. Swift published notes on Mr. Pope's Dunciad under that name, and whose merry and facetious way of writing and Banter this Author greatly admires" (p. 90). Whiston's propensity for prophesying resulted in his being dubbed by contemporaries as "Prophet Whiston." (See "Some Advertisements of Mr. Henley," October 31 and November 4, 1726, published in Henley's Letters and Advertisements Which Concern Mr. Whiston [London, 1727].)

32. Note to Book IV, l. 647, Twick. Ed., p. 408.
33. Astronomic Principles of Religion, natural and revealed (London, 1717). A second edition appeared in 1725.
34. Note to Book IV, l. 643, Twick. Ed., p. 408.
35. William Whiston, A Surprising Account of a Meteor seen in London, 1716 (London, 1716), p. 76. Cf. Astronomic Principles of Religion, pp. 22ff., 148ff. for similar views on the natural causes of the Conflagration.
36. Theory, Book II, p. 215.
37. Some Animadversions Upon a Book, Intituled the Theory of the Earth, "Preface."
38. An Examination of Dr. Burnet's Theory of the Earth, pp. 314, 344-5. Burnet's and Whiston's naturalizing of Biblical miracles was also protested by Archibald Lovell, who in his Summary of Material Heads, attacked Burnet as a "free thinker," who "is pleased to object against the manner of the Deluge, as it is related by Moses" (p. 1), and "to drown the World without any necessity of Miracles" (p. 14), and William Nicholls who, in his A Conference with a Theist (London, 1698), part 2, argued that Whiston's imputing the Deluge to "the necessary Laws of a Comet's Trajection, which the Scriptures tell us was sent by God for the Sin of Mankind, seems to give too great a Scope for the scoffs of Libertines, and the Atheistical Fatality" (p. 193).
39. (London, 1700), pp. 81, 86; 4th ed. (London, 1723), vol. I, p. 184.
40. Pope's imagery of "Mountains of Casuistry heaped" on Truth's head in l. 642 suggests a possible further hit at the "world-makers." In his Theory Burnet viewed Mountains as the vast "Relics" of a "ruined Earth," and much of the Burnet controversy was concerned with arguments concerning the beauty or utility of mountains. Cf. Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, Chapter Six, "The Burnet Controversy: The Mountains in Labor," pp. 225-270, and McKillop, The Background of Thomson's Seasons, p. 99.
41. See note to Book IV, l. 649, Twick. Ed., p. 409.
42. Cf. George Sherburn, "The Dunciad, Book IV," in Essential Articles for the Study of Alexander Pope, ed. Maynard Mack (Hamden, Conn., 1964), p. 668.

43. Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, p. 238. Nicolson describes (pp. 228-9) how such key figures as Anthony Collins and Charles Blount used the Archaeologiae Philosophicae as jumping off points for their deistic arguments.
44. Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, p. 238.
45. This description of the general ecclesiastical objection raised against the Archaeologiae appears in Charles Blount's "A Letter to My Worthy Friend, Mr. Gildon, In Vindication of Dr. Burnet," published in the Oracles of Reason (London, 1695), p. 2.
46. Remarks upon an Essay concerning Humane Understanding (London, 1697); Second Remarks upon an Essay concerning Humane Understanding (London, 1697); Third Remarks upon an Essay concerning Humane Understanding (London, 1697). Cf. Tuveson, "The Origins of 'Moral Sense'," Huntington Library Quarterly, VII (1947-8), 241-59.
47. Theory, Book II, p. 210. Cf. Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, p. 239. The section on "Burnet" in the DNB notes how in De Fide "Burnet regards the historical religions as based upon the religion of nature, and rejects original sin, and the 'magical' theory of the sacraments" (Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee [London, 1855-1900], vol. III, p. 409).
48. In his History of Religion in England, John Stoughton points out that "few men were more talked of in his time than Whiston" (4th ed. [London, 1881], vol. V, pp. 371-2).
49. Leslie Stephen, History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, 3rd ed. (New York, 1962), vol. I, p. 356.
50. Cf. Stoughton, History of Religion in England, vol. V, p. 430.
51. Cf. Mr. Collins's Discourse of Free-Thinking Put Into English, By Way of Abstract, For the Use of the Poor, By a Friend of the Author, in A Supplement to Dr. Swift's Works (London, 1779), vol. I, pp. 268, 282, 285. In his Will-with-a Wisp (London, 1714), Simon Scriblerus accused Whiston of "confounding that great Mystery /Trinity/ of our Faith, a Mystery that transcends all Mathematics and is far above the Reach of any rational Demonstration" (p. 4).
52. In 1719 Sacheverell attempted to exclude Whiston, on the grounds of his denial of Christ's divinity,

from St. Andrew's Church in Holborn. Cf. Mr. Whiston's Account of Dr. Sacheverell's Proceedings In Order to Exclude him from St. Andrew's Church in Holborn (London, 1719), esp. pp. 5-6. In a document entitled, "Presentation of the Present State of Religion," prepared for a special Convocation of both Houses of Parliament to censure Whiston in 1710, Bishop Atterbury denounced all dissenters, particularly Socinians, and described Whiston's sympathizers as "the determined enemies of all religion and goodness." Cf. John Stoughton, History of Religion in England, vol. V, pp. 372-3.

53. It should be remembered that as early as his Essay on Criticism (1711) Pope had allied himself with clergymen of a conservative and high-church position, particularly in regard to their distrust of the spread of "Socinian" and Latitudinarian doctrines. Cf. Essay on Criticism, ll. 544-553, and the remarks of the Twickenham editors of the Essay on these lines (Pastoral Poetry and An Essay on Criticism, pp. 300-304).
54. See notes to Book IV, ll. 471 and 476-476, Twick. Ed., pp. 386-7.
55. George Sherburn, "The Dunciad, Book IV," p. 668.
56. See note to Book IV, l. 453, Twick. Ed., p. 385.
57. Cf. Sutherland, "Introduction" to the Dunciad, p. xxx, and Williams, Pope's Dunciad, p. lll.
58. The Correspondence of Alexander Pope, vol. IV, p. 5.
59. Note to Book IV, ll. 465-8, Twick. Ed., p. 386.
60. (London, 1741). The forward reads "by our author and Dr. Arbuthnot." In a second edition in Dublin in 1741, the work was attributed to Pope alone.
61. John Arbuthnot, Mathematician and Satirist (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), p. 266.
62. See Kerby-Miller, "Bibliography of the Principal editions" of the Memoirs, nos. 5 and 7, pp. 79 and 81.
63. Cf. Kerby-Miller, Memoirs, p. 59. The Dunciad, itself, as James Sutherland emphasizes in his introduction to the poem, was a direct outgrowth of the Scriblerian project, and represents "one of the chief literary exhibits of the Scriblerus Club" (Twick. Ed., p. xxxix).

64. Kerby-Miller, Memoirs, p. 166.
65. Cf. Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, p. 247; "Swift and the World-Makers," pp. 66-7. See also Memoirs in which the editor describes Scriblerus as "a learned fool on the scale of Woodward and Whiston" (p. 374).
66. Namely, 1) "All the New Theories of the Deluge"; 2) the use "of the Material Subtilis in resolving the grand Phaenomena of Nature" (cf. John Arbuthnot, p. 262); 3) "the method of discovering the Longitude by Bomb-Vessels"; 4) "A Mechanical Explication of the Formation of the Universe, according to the Epicurean Hypothesis"; 5) "An Investigation of the . . . proportion of the specific Gravity of Solid Matter to that of Fluid" (cf. John Arbuthnot, p. 262); 6) "A Calculation of the proportion in which the Fluids of the earth decrease"; 7) "and of the period in which they will be totally exhausted" (cf. Kerby-Miller, Memoirs, p. 338); 8) "A Computation of the Duration of the Sun, and how long it will last before it be burn'd out"; 9) "Tide-Tables, for a Comet, that is to approximate towards the Earth"; 10) "A Project to build Two Poles to the Meridian, with immense Lighthouses on the top of them"; 11) "a Menstrum to dissolve the Stone, made of Dr. Woodward's Universal Deluge-water" (Memoirs, pp. 167-8). The relationship of these attacks on the world-makers in the Memoirs and Pope's specific attacks in the Dunciad will be discussed in detail further on in this chapter.
67. Note to Book IV, l. 459, Twick. Ed., p. 385.
68. Note to Book IV, l. 472, Twick. Ed., p. 387.
69. An Examination of Dr. Burnet's Theory of the Earth, p.2.
70. Ibid., pp. 10, 12.
71. The Abyssinian Philosophy Confuted, "To the Reader."
72. Cf. Thomas Baker, Reflections on Learning (London, 1700), pp. 79-84; Benjamin Martin, The Philosophical Grammar, 2nd ed. (London, 1738), p. 18; Bevil Higgons, A Poem on Nature (London, 1736), ll. 81-5; Moses Browne, An Essay on the Universe, in Poems on Various Subjects (London, 1739), Book I, p. 307, note to ll. 274ff.; Francois Marie Arouet de Voltaire, Dissertation sur les changemens arrivés dans notre globe, et sur les pétrifications qu'on prétend en être encore les témoignages (1729), The Changes that Have Happened in our Globe, In The Works of Voltaire, vol. XXXIX, pp. 284-9.

73. The Works of the Late Right Honourable Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke (London, 1809), vol. IV, pp. 458-461; vol. V, p. 91. Cf. Sutherland's note to l. 471 (p. 387) of the Dunciad in which he quotes Bolingbroke's Letter to Pope. In addition to their a priori speculations in natural philosophy, both Burnet and Whiston, as we have seen, emphasized an a priori mode of reasoning in theological and moral matters. The damning of "implicit faith and holy lies" (Book IV, l. 463, Twick. Ed., p. 386) attributed to the Clerk was a charge frequently hurled at both theologians. Consider, for example, the following statement from an anonymous pamphlet attacking Whiston on behalf of Dr. Sacheverell: "Such is the Degeneracy of the Present Age, such is the Libertinism of Mankind, as to examine whatever they believe, and to laugh at the Doctrine of implicit Faith," A Short Vindication of the Reverend Dr. Sacheverell's Late Endeavour to turn Mr. Whiston out of his Church, published in A Defense of the Id. Bishop of London in Answer to Mr. Whiston's Letter of Thanks to His Lordship (London, 1719), p. 30.
74. See note to Book IV, l. 21, Twick. Ed., p. 342.
75. Cf. Tuveson, "Swift and the World-Makers," p. 70, for Swift's attack in The Battle of the Books, and A True and Faithful Narrative (Swift-Pope Miscellanies, "Third Volume," pp. 260-1), for Gay's satiric reference to Whiston's exact mathematical "calculation" of the end-of-the-world comet.
76. See note to Book IV, l. 31, Twick. Ed., p. 343.
77. Memoirs, pp. 166-7. Whiston himself had actually been much involved with several eighteenth-century schemes for squaring the circle (cf. Will-with-a-Wisp, Simon Scriblerus, p. 58) which perhaps accounts for the allusions in both the Memoirs and the Dunciad.
78. Note to Book IV, l. 75, Twick. Ed., p. 348.
79. See note to Book IV, l. 473, Twick. Ed., p. 387.
80. The "particles" in Descartes' vortexes were, as Miss Nicolson notes, "descendents of the atoms of Democritus, Epicurus, Lucretius" (Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, p. 183). Compare Pope's imagery of the atomistic dunces in Dulness's "Vortex" with Swift's description of the madness of "system-makers" in Chapter IX of A Tale of a Tub (p. 167): "Epicurus modestly hoped, that one Time or other, a certain Fortuitous Concourse of all men's Opinions

would be certain Clinamina, unite in the Notions of Atoms and Void, as these did on the Original of all Things. Cartesius reckoned to see before he died, the Sentiments of all Philosophers, like so many lesser Stars in his Romantick System, rapt and drawn within his own Vortex."

81. Note to Book IV, ll. 76-101, Twick. Ed., pp. 348-9.
82. Astronomic Principles of Religion, pp. 22-3. Cf. p. 43 which describes the "Eccentric" movement of comets "in their Perihelia around the Sun." Pope's debt to Whiston "in astronomy" was perhaps paid off in this imagery. In his Theory, Burnet commented on the effects of comets in the final conflagration thus: "For I do not doubt but the Comets will bear a part in this Tragedy, and have something extraordinary in them at that time; either as to number, or bigness, or nearness to the Earth" (Book III, p. 69).
83. In his God's Revenge against Punning (in The Prose Works of Alexander Pope), Pope described one of the signs of a "dreadful conflagration" as "Nine Comets seen at once over Soho-Square" (p. 270).
84. Memoirs, p. 167.
85. Gulliver's Travels 1726, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford, 1959), p. 164.
86. Cf. Williams, Pope's Dunciad, Chapter V, "Of Wisdom and Dulness."
87. Note to Book IV, l. 248, Twick. Ed., p. 368.
88. Note to Book IV, ll. 255-271, Twick. Ed., p. 369.
89. Cf. Memoirs, pp. 118, 120.
90. Ibid., p. 129.
91. Ibid., p. 168.
92. Ibid., p. 343.
93. Ibid., p. 335.
94. Cf. "Ode, for Musick" (1714), Swift-Pope Miscellanies, "Last Volume" (1727), pp. 172-3; Three Hours After Marriage, ed. Richard Morton and William M. Peterson (Painesville, Ohio, 1961), vol. I, p. 32.

95. To the Right Honourable the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London, the Humble Petition of the Colliers, Cooks, Cook Maids, Blacksmiths, Jack-makers, Braziers and others, in Swift-Pope Miscellanies, "Third Volume" (1732), p. 78.
96. Memoirs, p. 167.
97. Note to Book IV, l. 244, Twick. Ed., p. 367. In this note Pope links this kind of "system" to the raptured vision which the Clerk later receives in ll. 487ff. The reference to Bishop Atterbury in l. 246 possibly alludes to Atterbury's attacks on Whiston.
98. Cf. Tuveson, "Swift and the World-Makers," p. 69.
99. The Battle of the Books, in A Tale of a Tub, p. 234.
100. There is some question whether this poem properly belongs to Gay or Arbuthnot. In his edition of Gay's works (The Poetical Works of John Gay /London, 1926/, pp. xxxi-xxxii), G. C. Faber publishes it with Gay's doubtful poems, feeling that the work belongs rather to Arbuthnot. In his John Gay, Favorite of the Wits (Durham, No.Car., 1940), p. 196, William Irving feels that Gay was the author, but that the "general idea" behind the work was Arbuthnot's or Pope's. What is important here is that the work was a product of the Scriblerian project and all three Scriblerians most probably had some share in creating it. All quotations from Gay's work will be taken from Faber's edition.
101. Annus Mirabilis, or The Wonderful Effects of the approaching Conjunction of the Planets, Jupiter, Mars and Saturn, Swift-Pope Miscellanies, "Third Volume" (1732), pp. 91-2.
102. In describing the effects of the prude's transformation, Gay or Arbuthnot parodied the world-makers' descriptions of the chasms and mountains which were suppose to accompany the action of the Flood. In ll. 60-4 of the Epistle to Doctor Woodward, for example, the prude compares her transformation to nature's transformation thus:
 "She seems prepar'd to give some Monster Birth;
 All Nature's sick--but whilst she labr'ing heaves,
 A gaping hideous Chasm her Bosom cleaves;
 Some Mountain She thrusts forth, to ease her Pain."
 In his "Introduction," G. C. Faber points out that the "simile of Mother Earth pushing up a Mountain suggests a hidden mock at Woodward's Theory of the Deluge" (p. xxxii).

103. Epistle to Doctor Woodward, l. 1, p. 640. Woodward is called "Galen" in l. 1 because of his medical activities. Cf. Leslie Beattie, John Arbuthnot, Chapter 3, "Satires on Woodward," pp. 190-262, esp. 242ff. for a description of these activities and Scriblerian satires on them.
104. Epistle to Doctor Woodward, ll. 7-10, 13-14, p. 640.
105. Ibid., ll. 19-28, p. 180. In his "Introduction" Faber notes the "remarkable parallelism between the opening passage of the Epistle from a Prude and ll. 19-27 of the Epistle to a Lady on her Passion for Old China" (p. xxxii). The allusion to "Fossiles" in l. 23 concerns Woodward's speculations on fossil remains in his An Essay towards a Natural History of the Earth (London, 1695).
106. Memoirs, p. 203.
107. Ibid., p. 168.
108. Cf. Memoirs, pp. 203ff.
109. Imitations of Horace, ed. John Butt, in The Twickenham Edition of The Poems of Alexander Pope (London, New Haven, 1953), vol. IV, pp. 27, 29. Woodward was also the target of Pope's and Arbuthnot's An Essay of the Learned Martinus Scriblerus, concerning the Origin of Sciences, Swift-Pope Miscellanies, "Third Volume" (1732), pp. 98-116.
110. See "Argument" to Book IV, Twick. Ed., p. 338.
111. The similarity in the passages from the Dunciad and the Epistle to Mr. Addison was noted by Elwin and Courthope, who, by way of identifying the antiquarian Mummius with Woodward, point out that Pope had earlier ridiculed Woodward in the "Vadius" portrait of the Epistle to Addison (The Works of Alexander Pope, ed. Whitwell Elwin and William J. Courthope /London, 1882/, vol. IV, p. 363). Cf. Sutherland's note to Book IV, l. 367, Twick Ed., p. 378, and Norman Ault's notes to ll. 36, 40-41, and 44 of the Epistle to Mr. Addison, in Minor Poems, p. 207.
112. In his note to "Vadius" in l. 41 of the Epistle, Norman Ault points out that the "scour'd Shield" refers to "Woodward's supposedly antique shield" (Minor Poems, p. 207).

113. Pescennius's full name was Pescennius Niger, the "Niger" of Pope's l. 370 in the Dunciad, Book VI. Cf. Ault's note to l. 39 of Epistle to Mr. Addison in Minor Poems, p. 207.
114. Minor Poems, ll. 39-44, pp. 205-6.
115. In his "Biographical Appendix" to the Twickenham Edition of the Dunciad, vol. VI, Sutherland curiously dismisses Elwin's and Courthope's identification on the grounds that "Woodward had been dead almost fifteen years when the New Dunciad (1742) was published" (p. 449). Pope included dozens of allusions to Woodward in the 1741 publication of the Memoirs, of course, and there are certainly other allusions to long "deceased" fools in the Dunciad.
116. See note to Book IV, l. 371, Twick. Ed., p. 379.
117. Memoirs, p. 97.
118. See note to Book IV, l. 375, Twick. Ed., p. 380.
119. Cf. Leslie Beattie, John Arbuthnot, pp. 258-9. Woodward's pet theory of vomits had been satirized, several years before the writing of the Dunciad note, in Pope's versification of the Fourth Satire of Dr. Donne (1733): "As one of Woodward's Patients, sick and sore / I puke, I nauseate--yet he thrusts in more" (Imitations of Horace, ll. 152-3, p. 37). Woodward's combative nature in this quarrel is also possibly hinted at in Pope's description of Mummius as "Fierce as a startled Adder" (Dunciad, IV, l. 373).
120. Note to Book IV, l. 517, Twick. Ed., p. 393.
121. Maynard Mack, "The Muse of Satire," Yale Review, XLI (1951), 92.
122. This phrase is Carl L. Becker's, in The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers (New Haven, Conn., 1932), p. 31.

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conduct, procedure and extent of man's redemp-
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gradually. London, 1743.

Vita

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This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the chairman of the candidate's supervisory committee and has been approved by all members of that committee. It was submitted to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate Council, and was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

June 20, 1967

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